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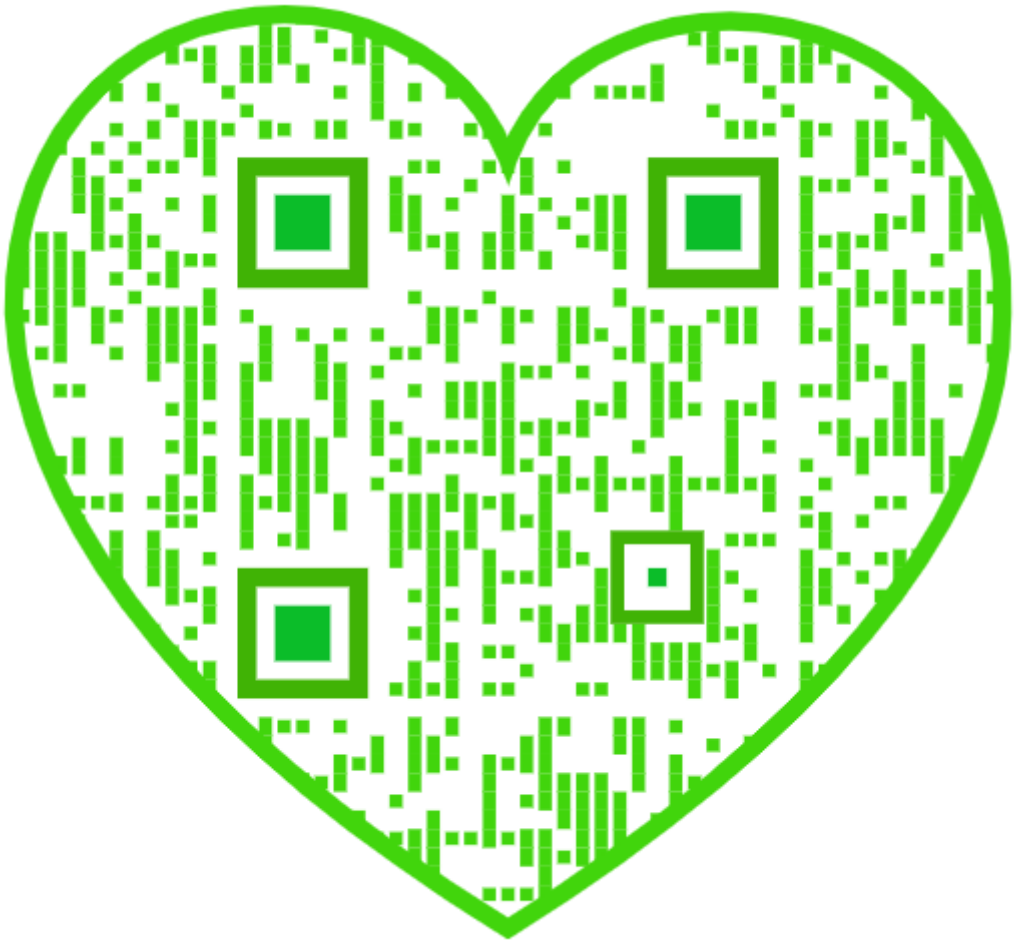

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The Evangelical Origins of the Muckrakers

By Bruce J. Evensen*

"Oh, God, give me faith. Oh, God, lead me out of this valley of depression. Oh, God, I am fearful and downcast, help me today to do my work bravely. I try to do large things, too large for me; I am not willing to be simple, straightforward, humble. I am terrified to speak generalities, to judge men and women by appearances, not realizing that they too, are having a bitter struggle within themselves. I am tempted to attack, not to press forward with positive faith. Oh, God, take me out of this. Oh, God, let me see and feel thy constant presence, let me feel my connections with thee and through thee with all of my neighbors."

The prayer is that of Ray Stannard Baker, one of the most prominent of the muckrakers, and the meditation appears in a 1908 notebook, which was written at the height of muckraking agitation for a better America.[1] What makes the statement so illuminating is not its moral thrust, for historians have seen that impulse at work in the reformers' call to action. But what chroniclers have paid insufficient attention to is the vital struggle of faith that appears at the center of many of the muckrakers' personal lives and how this warfare became externalized in their writings.

This article analyzes the private and public writings of seven muckrakers in the context of the evangelical origins of this remarkable group of men and women. In doing so, the researcher is reminded of the dangers of over-simplification, of Lincoln Steffen's warning to Upton Sinclair on the occasion of Edmund Wilson's muckraking of the muckrakers more than fifty years ago. "The fact that he lumps us is a bad sign," Steffens wrote, suggesting they consider killing the critic and

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[1]Ray Stannard Baker, Notebook "K," (1908), 131. Library of Congress. Washington, D.C.

pleading self-defense.[2] Fearing a similar fate, this research will attempt to portray seven of these muckrakers as individuals, who shared a common context, which in turn produced a literature as rich and complex as the men and women who made it.

A half century's research on the muckrakers has found no shortage of opinions on who they were and what they intended.[3] Historical interpretation of the muckrakers' work basically divided over the question of whether the muckrakers were "liberal social reformers" or "conservative advocates of middle-class values and interests." The debate arose in the post-World War II generation of historians who placed the muckrakers in the broader context of the debate then underway over "consensus" and "class conflict." The effect of the discussion was to diminish the role of the muckrakers as moral crusaders and to see them instead as self-interested defenders of the status quo.[4]

What these frames of reference have tended to overlook is what the muckrakers saw themselves as doing and the deeply personal struggle over faith that informed their work. Two historians, Richard Hofstadter and Harold Wilson, have argued the muckrakers were attempting to achieve an "unselfish consensus" based on "Protestant and Social Gospel norms."[5] But the Hofstadter hypothesis, later developed by Hays, Wiebe, and Mowry, saw this popular appeal as a pretext through which the muckrakers attempted to fend off changes brought by industrialization and immigration which threatened their social position.[6] Wilson similarly sees a sociological explanation behind

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[2]Ella Winter and Granville Hicks, *The Letters of Lincoln Steffens*, vol. 2 (New York: 1938), 928. Copy of letter from Steffens to Upton Sinclair, dated September 25, 1932.

[3]See Harry H. Stein, "American Muckrakers and Muckraking: The 50-Year Scholarship," *Journalism Quarterly* 56 (1979), 9-17, for a summary of the literature. Major works which describe the development of thinking on the muckrakers include H.U. Faulkner, *The Quest for Social Justice, 1898-1914* (New York: 1931); C.C. Regier, *The Era of the Muckrakers* (Chapel Hill: 1932), and Louis Filler, *Crusaders for American Liberalism* (Yellow Springs: 1939). Compare to post-war works by Richard Hofstadter, *Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.* (New York: 1959); Eric Goldman, *Rendezvous with Destiny: A History of Modern American Reform* (New York: 1959); Henry F. May, *The End of American Innocence: A Study of the First Years of Our Time* (New York: 1959); Judson Grenier, "Muckraking and Muckrakers: An Historical Definition," *Journalism Quarterly* (1963); John E. Semonoche, "Teddy Roosevelt's 'Muck-rake Speech': A Reassessment," *Mid-America* (April 1964); Stanley K. Schultz, "The Morality of Politics: The Muckraker's Vision of Democracy," *Journal of American History* (December 1965); John G. Cawelti, *Apostles of the Self-Made Man* (Chicago: 1965); Harold Wilson, *McClure's Magazine and the Muckrakers* (Princeton: 1970); Robert M. Crunden, *The Superfluous Men: Conservative Critics of American Culture, 1900-1945* (Austin: 1977); Richard L. McCormick, "The Discovery That Business Corrupts: A Reappraisal of the Origins of Progressivism," *American Historical Review* 86 (April 1981); Robert M. Crunden, *Ministers of Reform: The Progressive Achievement in American Civilization, 1889-1920* (New York: 1982); and Shiela Reaves, "How Radical Were the Muckrakers? Socialist Press Views, 1902-1906," *Journalism Quarterly* 61 (Winter 1984).

[4]See Wm. David Sloan, "American Muckrakers, 1901-1917: Conservative Defenders or Liberal Reformers?" Paper given at the AEJMC Southeastern Regional Colloquium, March 29-30, 1985.

[5]Wilson, 265-289. Hofstadter, 173-212.

[6]Hofstadter, 210. Samuel P. Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency: The Progressive Conservation Movement, 1890-1920* (Cambridge: 1968). Robert H. Wiebe, *Businessmen and Reform: A Study of the Progressive Movement* (Cambridge: 1968). See also, George E. Mowry, *The Era of*

muckraking agitation.[7] They were driven as well, he writes, by a morality of absolutes which confused the fragmentation stemming from immigration, the concentration of wealth, and the rise of the cities, with a deterioration in the old order familiar to them.

Wilson attempts to show that this "morality of absolutes" stemmed from the muckrakers' abandonment of the faith of their fathers and their conversion to Social Darwinism. This transformation, he suggests, took place with "remarkable ease" and led to a "radical social Christianity" which was the synthesis of Darwinian determinism and the altruism of the Golden Rule. The muckrakers "swept divinity" and "inspiration" aside in "heralding a new social order" which was essentially mechanistic. Human society led by a divine "force" was evolving progressively. The purpose of law and governments was to recognize this transformation and to develop policies and institutions to move matters along.[8]

An analysis of the diaries, notebooks, and private papers of several leading muckrakers casts doubt on whether they embraced Social Darwinism with "remarkable ease" and brings into perspective the inner conflicts which lay behind the public proclamation of their progressivism. The battle they waged was not so much that people should have faith but to describe what that faith should be in. For some of the muckrakers the higher criticism of Bible commentators had shaken the certainty of the old-time religion. Their challenge then became finding an absolute to substitute for a belief in the Bible as the inspired Word of God, something that could arouse a generation to right thinking and right conduct. It is perhaps the final paradox of the progressive period that those who tried to teach others how to live, were forever searching for the same answers themselves.

S.S. McClure: A Progressive Pilgrim

The process of spiritual seeking and uncertainty is nowhere more apparent than in the life of Samuel Sidney McClure, the founder of the progenitor muckraking magazine. McClure remembered only three books from his Ulster home -- a Bible, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, and *Pilgrim's Progress*. His Presbyterian parents, he writes in his autobiography, had been caught up in a revival that had swept Northern Ireland in 1859. The experience had changed their lives by returning them to the "simple teachings of the early church." His father's death and his mother's poverty weighed heavily upon him when he arrived in

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Theodore Roosevelt, 1900-1912 (New York: 1958); John Braeman, "Seven Progressives," *Business History Review* 35 (1961); and Gabriel Kolko, *The Triumph of Conservatism: A Reinterpretation of American History, 1910-1916* (New York: 1963).

[7]Wilson, 285-289.

[8]Ibid., ch. 19.

Galesburg, Illinois, with fifteen cents in his pocket. At Knox College he would find a "purpose" for his life.[9]

"Forms wax old and perish," he wrote in his class notes. "Principles are eternal." Principles of "right and wrong" necessarily had their foundation in teaming up with God in the battle over His creation. "We see that we are engaged in a terrible conflict," he wrote, following his studies of the Apostle Paul, "not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness of this world." He was sure that "though strife be long, yet slowly and surely it will end with the glorious triumph of the right."[10]

There were two great facts of civilization as McClure saw it -- the individual and the state. The latter existed solely for the former, even as the human soul existed only for God. God would equip the "sensitive, shrinking, quivering soul" to fight His battles for Him. For God had placed into the hearts of those who followed him an "enthusiasm" for service. It was only through such service that one's self was brought into proper view. Individuality consisted of following "enthusiastically" the pathway of service God had for man.[11]

It was in June of 1893, the month the bottom dropped out of the Stock Market and the panic spread westward from Wall Street, that McClure published the first number of his monthly magazine. Though it would be a decade before the publication would take on the appearance of a muckraking journal, McClure from the outset saw it as having a high purpose. In April of 1894 while in Paris searching for literary material for the magazine, he wrote his wife that he saw himself "playing for high stakes." He reported that he was in an "awful condition." He owed "heaps of money everywhere." He had not even paid his church dues. Yet he felt himself on the edge of a great breakthrough. The Lord had some "great work" for him to do.[12]

As McClure shifted around with various ideas to make the magazine more attractive, his wife warned him to be true to his high ideals and not sacrifice the magazine to commercial interests. McClure's statement of policy throughout this period remained high-minded. His May 1894 issue, which featured a piece by Henry Drummond on American evangelist Dwight L. Moody, told readers it was endeavoring to "reflect the moving spirit of this time" by setting forth the achievements of the "great men of the day" and the "human struggle for exis-

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[9]S.S. McClure, *My Autobiography* (New York: 1963), 18, 59 and 62.

[10]McClure mss. Writings, n.d. Knox College class papers. Lilly Library. Indiana University. Bloomington, Indiana.

[11]Ibid.

[12]McClure mss. Correspondence. Box 3. Folder 4. April 12, 1894. S.S. McClure to Hattie McClure.

tence and development."[13]

It was not only McClure's wife, but his mother, Elizabeth, who expressed concern that the magazine be put to still higher purposes. In January 1895, she wrote him that her time on the earth was now "short." She therefore encouraged her son to publish only the work of men "sound in God's word." If her son wanted to bring "honor and glory to God" there was "only one way to do it." And that was "God's way." Her son needed to find "God's will." The magazine could be an instrument for that will, but she feared her son might miss this chance through lack of prayer and failure to "study God's will." Her greatest delight would be to have her son "if possible" follow the steps of his parents, so that whatever he did, he would do it "for God."[14]

By the end of the year, McClure could boast that circulation had risen from 45,000 to 80,000. Along with John S. Phillips, an old college classmate, now his chief editor, he promised "noble entertainment" and "worthy knowledge" in coming issues designed to "uplift, refresh and encourage all who read it."[15]

While it has been suggested that McClure turned to muckraking to boost circulation, his greatest gains in readership had taken place years earlier, thanks in large part to Ida Tarbell's series on Abraham Lincoln. The series had been promoted as "proceeding in an original way with the subject." Tarbell's writing, readers were promised, would be both "entertaining and carefully considered." It would rely on materials that had been gathered directly "from original sources," from people who had known Lincoln personally as well as from the President's own writings and correspondence.[16]

McClure's Magazine sold out in November and December of 1895, having shown a gain of 175,000 in circulation since the series started, while closing out the year with a readership of over 300,000. McClure wrote that his soul seemed finally "at rest." The "days of struggle" seemed over. He was now happy with his God.[17]

Tarbell's Lincoln portrait and the publicity surrounding the series idealized him as a perfect type while satisfying McClure's need to offer his readers a leader worthy of emulation. The piece celebrated Lincoln's pioneering origin and made much of the fact that he came from the stock of a "pioneering race of men and women." He had emerged from an ideal past where "lessons learned in early school out in the

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[13]*McClure's Magazine*, May 1894, 8-9.

[14]*McClure's Magazine*, December 1894, 3. Also, *McClure's Magazine*, July 1895, 16.

[15]McClure mss. Correspondence. Box 3. Folder 7. Elyatt (Elizabeth) Simpson to S.S. McClure. September 2, 1895.

[16]*McClure's Magazine*, October 1895, 480.

[17]McClure mss. Correspondence. Box 3. Folder 10. Letter from S.S. McClure to Hattie McClure. September 2, 1895.

forest were grand and good." Everything around and about Lincoln "was just as it came from the hands of the Creator." It was "good" and it was "beautiful." It developed "both the head and the heart." It produced a remarkable President, who had celebrated democratic sacrifice at Gettysburg and the ideal of liberty when he emancipated the slaves. It was then, *McClure's* reported, that "God knew that he was good."[18]

McClure's Lincoln series was more than a circulation-building device. It was McClure's effort at constructing an ideal type, someone who had "striven with God" in the "glorious triumph of the right." When McClure returned to Knox College after his election to the board of trustees, he remarked that it had been thirty-eight years since Lincoln had last addressed a Galesburg audience. "What a legacy to our people," he commented, "was the memory of Lincoln." Soon the time would come when "no one living shall have seen Lincoln." That is why it was necessary to remind this and future generations what he stood for. Integrity, honor, and truthfulness had emanated from "his very soul." This generation needed heroes like that.[19]

Just after the Lincoln series, McClure wrote Phillips an excited letter. He reported "stumbling on" what would probably be "the most important publishing venture of our time." A long-awaited new translation of the Bible had just appeared. Its whole purpose had been to "re-discover the Bible, to make it really understandable." It would be an "indispensable book to all who believed in the Bible."[20] As originally conceived, the Bible series would run in 20 parts over four years.

Within weeks, McClure had booked passage to Palestine ostensibly to find background material for the series. His letters to his wife reveal the journey to have been a personal odyssey of faith. Passing through each of the seven gates of the Old City of Jerusalem, McClure marvelled that "God was here as a man, and I can't get away from that." Days later he reported that he was "reading and re-reading the gospels." He never knew the Bible to be "so fascinating." He was now convinced as never before that "God approves of our work."[21]

The years leading up to McClure's muckraking were filled with this endless stream of hope balanced by periods of ambivalence and skepticism. His ceaseless efforts at entering into fellowship with men of like-minded faith finished only in frustration. "I attended a Sal-

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[18] *McClure's Magazine*, January 1896, 206. Also, McClure mss. Correspondence. January 1896. Box 3. Folder 12.

[19] McClure mss. Writings, n.d. "The Greatness of Knox College" (1894).

[20] McClure mss. Correspondence. Box 3. Folder 12. Letter from S.S. McClure to John Phillips. February 10, 1896.

[21] McClure mss. Correspondence. Box 3. Folder 13. Letters from S.S. McClure to Harriet McClure, dated May 4, 10, 11 and 16, 1896. On the 16th he added, "I realize more and more the miracle of Christ's life. His words and deeds seem more and more wonderful."

vation Army preaching service," he wrote his wife. "It was bad." Booth's great army kept shouting "that God was there and at work, though they didn't seem to really believe it. It made me sad."[22] Throughout what remained of the nineties, the magazine described its purpose as offering month to month "transcription" of the times, encouraging the upbuilding of the nation's "moral self-respect." McClure wrote that while his was not a "religious magazine," no "Christian family" should be without it. McClure advertised himself as offering the family something to live by and for.[23] At century's end, McClure wrote his wife how "aware" he had been of God's blessing. And she wrote him how convinced she was that there was yet "some special work" he would do to "help bring the world back to God."[24]

McClure was now poised at the beginning of his career as the country's greatest muckraking publisher. It was a period of acute financial and personal hardships which would ultimately lead to his surrender of the magazine and the dashing of his hopes to build through it a publishing empire. "The year 1902 has been the most prosperous in the history of *McClure's Magazine*," he told his readers, while writing his wife the magazine was "starved" for funds.[25] Muckraking had made no immediate impact in circulation patterns and was expensive to do properly. "I'm having my usual breakdown," he wrote his wife, in another of his talent hunts in Europe. Ida Tarbell, he later told his wife, would be her "mainstay" in the event of his death.[26]

McClure proved a very lively corpse. The next decade would see muckraking cause a minor sensation, and McClure for a short time rode the crest of it, dining with President Roosevelt and Alexander Graham Bell, while addressing large audiences on the dangers that lurked all around them. In January 1904 he told the Twentieth Century Club in Brooklyn that nationwide those who broke the law conspired to put in office those "who let them." Machines existed in nearly every American city, and they operated to benefit some at the expense of others. Machine politics had left America "at the bottom of all civilized countries." Major corporations led in the "lawlessness." The people needed to rise and "protect" themselves. That was what *McClure's* was in business to help them to do.[27]

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[22]McClure mss. Box 3. Folder 15. Letter from S.S. McClure to Harriet McClure. August 9, 1896.

[23]*McClure's Magazine*, December 1896, p. 192, and October 1897, 1101.

[24]McClure mss. Box 3. Folder 21. The letters were exchanged on June 2, 1899.

[25]*McClure's Magazine*, October 1902. Also, McClure mss. Box 4. Folder 3. From S.S. McClure to Harriet McClure. April 24, 1902.

[26]McClure mss. Box 4. Folder 6. Undated. Letter from S.S. McClure to Harriet McClure. Also, Box 4. Folder 8. Letter from S.S. McClure to Harriet McClure. March 22, 1903.

[27]McClure mss. Box 4. Folder 12. Address to the Twentieth Century Club. Brooklyn, New York. January 30, 1904.

Years later he told the New York branch of the Y.M.C.A. the same thing. "The whole function of government," he observed, had been "to protect those who could not protect themselves." Beginning with Ida Tarbell's attack on the Standard Oil Trust, he told them, "we have fought for those unable to defend themselves."[28]

A generation later, as historians began to write their summaries of the Progressive period in American history and the magazine which had tirelessly promoted its program, McClure wrote Tarbell that critics had gotten it all wrong. His "overwhelming passion" with the magazine had been to make it "as perfect as possible" by laying out a series of principles through which partial men could be made whole.[29]

Tarbell's "Religion"

McClure was to maintain a lifelong friendship with Ida Tarbell, the first of the muckrakers, and a woman whose spiritual sensibilities may have been the closest to his. Like McClure, Tarbell wrote extensively about the forces that formed her. She described herself as having been raised in a God-fearing Western Pennsylvania family, rigorous not only in its church attendance, but also in prayer meetings and revivals. She had received Christ at age eleven. The life of prayer which followed aroused "self-observation," and this took her to the literature of Darwin and Spencer.[30] After serving as preceptress at the Poland Union Seminary in Poland, Ohio, where she taught geology and botany, she went to France, and there continued both her studies and her spiritual search, which by the early nineties found her still attempting to reconcile her "need to feel and to know."[31]

On the eve of McClure's offer to join his staff, she remembered that she was "continuing [her] search for God in the great cathedrals of Europe." She later explained the impact this spiritual quest had on her muckraking career. It grew out of a childlike "conviction of divine goodness at work in the world." Despite the growing sense of life's injustice and ugliness she could not shake an "inward certainty" that the "central principle of things is beneficence." This "serene, stable self-assurance" had a "hold" on Tarbell. It remained even as she embraced Darwinian evolution and lost the sense that God had a "human outline."[32]

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[28]McClure mss. Box 6. Folder 6. Address to members of the 57th Street branch of the Y.M.C.A. April 10, 1911.

[29]McClure mss. S.S. McClure to Ida Tarbell. October 1, 1937. See also McClure mss. Box 4. Folder 17. Letter from S.S. McClure to Harriet McClure. August 27, 1904.

[30]Ida M. Tarbell, *All in a Day's Work* (New York, 1939), 15-16.

[31]Kathleen Brady, *Ida M. Tarbell* (New York, 1985), 31 and 61.

[32]Ida M. Tarbell, "My Religion," 1-2. Lawrence Lee Pelletier Library. Allegheny College. Meadville, Pennsylvania.

Tarbell expressed little patience with the fundamentalist-modernist argument then permeating the church. She thought herself "outside" that quarrel. One's works and character reflected "true spirituality." Christianity was simply the "best system" because it was based on the "brotherhood of man." Political institutions consistent with that divine purpose were good. Those that operated on the basis of a different set of ethics were dangerous.[33]

When she accepted McClure's offer and returned to America, she was immediately struck by the changes which had taken place during her several years' absence. What she most feared now, she wrote, was that "we were raising our standard of living at the expense of our standard of character." She was convinced that "personal human betterment" necessarily rested on a "sound moral basis" as well as a "personal search for the meaning of the mystery of God."[34]

Tarbell wrote that her personal search for answers to that mystery was at the center of her muckraking. It formed her notion of how a "decent and useful person" could be formed and later could learn to function in a social system antagonistic to individual dignity. Her "History of the Standard Oil Company" serialized in *McClure's Magazine* was a revelation of the evil at work in human society. John D. Rockefeller employed "force and fraud, sly tricks and special privilege to get his way." His activities were only a symptom of a phenomenon which went deeper. Blackmail was becoming a "natural part" of business practice. The result, she found, was not only a "leech" on the public pocket, but the "contamination of commerce." Only the principles of Christian fair play, she argued, could transform business practice and make it a "fit pursuit for our young men."[35]

Biographers might charge that Tarbell's "greatest miscalculation" was that she relied on the Golden Rule too much and law not enough in bringing about change, but what they fail to appreciate fully is how Tarbell, McClure, and other muckrakers understood their primary role and the intensely spiritual environment in which that fervor arose. Tarbell was not indifferent to the need for legal reform; but like her fellow muckrakers, she understood the central importance moral regeneration and moral consensus played in creating a human community in which democratic institutions could be allowed to work. Amelioration of "human sufferings, inequalities, greed, ignorance," she wrote, did not come through law alone, but was as well a fundamental matter of the

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[33]Ibid., 3-7.

[34]Tarbell, *All in a Day's Work*, 407.

[35]Ibid., 16, 27-29 and 407. Also, Tarbell, *History of the Standard Oil Company* (New York, 1904), 268 and 287-289.

human heart.[36]

She saw her whole life as having been spent in a "striving in solitude and silence to enter into a fuller understanding of the divine." But that understanding, she insisted, was the only means by which the "moral diseases" -- pride, greed, hypocrisy, cruelty, irreverence, and cowardliness -- which so afflicted the age could be overcome. If the Bible gave men and women anything, it gave them a conception of how they ought to live. What is more, it showed them a way in which "the essential brotherhood of man" could be brought into being. She was convinced it came by bearing witness to an "inner light," a light which, if encouraged to develop, was alone capable of binding men to other men. Men would either "hunger and thirst after righteousness, mercy, meekness, and purity of heart," she wrote, or give way to the "poisonous" selfishness implicit in modern living. Her writing had been to call people to righteousness and to show them a means of how they might establish "right conduct" for themselves and their communities.[37]

Baker's Spiritual Unrest

McClure's publication in January 1903 of the third installment of Tarbell's series on Standard Oil coincided with Lincoln Steffens' expose on Minneapolis political practices and Ray Stannard Baker's attack on corrupt labor practices. The edition was billed as an analysis of the American "contempt" for law, and it was to do much in igniting Baker's forty-year fire for progressive causes. It was a career that would take him from *McClure's* to the *American Chronicle*, to a career as the author of best-selling fiction, and finally to a career as aide to and biographer of Woodrow Wilson. The whole of this extraordinary progression was punctuated by flashes of spiritual certainty and spiritual unrest and a life consciously led in service to God.

Baker began his autobiography by remembering that the Bible on which he had been brought up in St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin, had highlighted within it by his Presbyterian parents the phrase, "in the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread." Rigorous self-discipline became a life's commitment. "I read. I studied," he wrote. From an early age he felt, as Tarbell did, "the essential truth of the teachings of Christ."[38] His father, educated at Oberlin, helped matters along. Ray earned a silver dollar from his father for finishing *Pilgrim's Progress* while in grade school. He took his meals in a dining room beneath the motto

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[36]Tarbell, "My Religion," 7-8. Also, Mary E. Tomkins, *Ida M. Tarbell* (New York, 1974), 158.

[37]Tarbell, "My Religion," 7-8.

[38]Ray Stannard Baker, *American Chronicle: The Autobiography of Ray Stannard Baker* (New York, 1945), 2 and 58.

"Thou God seest me."[39]

Perhaps no future muckraker had a firmer foundation laid in religious life than did Baker. Sunday in St. Croix Falls was a day entirely set apart. Sunday school and church in the morning were followed by a study of the scriptures in the afternoon, and, at six, an evening service. In addition, there were the weekly Thursday evening prayer meetings in which the Bakers took the leading role.[40]

"Plow deeply, till thoroughly," he recalled his father told him as he prepared to begin his career in journalism. "Scatter the seed with care and the harvest will be all you hoped for."[41]

Like other muckrakers, Baker for a lifetime fought a "spiritual unrest" as he attempted to reconcile his old familiar faith with the higher criticism then engulfing much of the church. Like Tarbell, he sought the silence of personal rumination, even sequestering himself in an Arizona desert for a time, to carry on his crisis privately in personal faith. "I was brought up a Presbyterian," he later observed, "but I liked being a Quaker best. When the talk began I was usually not so certain. I found myself descending from the high places." Darwin's theories of evolution and natural selection had put him "much at sea as to what I should believe." The serpent, he said of his mental confusion, "began to tempt me."[42] Baker traced his "literature of exposure" to his encounters with William T. Stead in Chicago.[43] The evangelist's efforts to "clean up" that city mobilized Baker's "spirit of service" and put him on a muckraking path of "earnest endeavor." Baker's biographer sees the whole of that career as stemming from a moralism which was "deep-seated, almost inexplicable, and which remained the basis of a lifetime of action."[44]

Baker's muckraking attack on the churches of his day along with his own private notebooks and papers gives the clearest idea of how his personal "journey of faith" formed a framework for his public writing. His criticism of New York City's Trinity Church, one of the nation's wealthiest congregations, was broadened into a critique of the "malaise" which had fallen over the Christian community. The problem was that the churches "lacked a moral vision." They did not know what they believed. They knew nothing of "social justice" and as a

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[39]Robert C. Bannister, *Ray Stannard Baker. The Mind and Thought of a Progressive* (New Haven, 1966), 3, 12 and 13.

[40]Ibid., 14.

[41]Baker, *American Chronicle*, p. 17.

[42]Ibid., 57-58.

[43]William T. Snead, *If Christ Came to Chicago* (Chicago, 1894, and Evansville, 1978). See also, Stead, *The Americanization of the World Or the Trend of the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1901, and New York, 1972).

[44]Baker, *American Chronicle*, 30-32. Also, Bannister, 14.

consequence had "no message for the common man." Baker's visits to many of the leading churches convinced him that they had a "passion for efficiency" which they put to "no real purpose." The churches had come to appreciate the "crisis" they were in and were now trying to "get back to the people." They were throwing money at the problem of community relations when it was not money but "the human touch" that was required."[45]

Wilson has suggested that Baker and many of his fellow muckrakers became good Social Darwinists and "swept aside" the need for a personal, active faith. But Baker states explicitly in *The Spiritual Unrest* that the churches had a dual mission -- both to the individual and the community. This recognition is reiterated throughout his notebooks, where he argues that "individual salvation" and "community salvation" are "complementary and reciprocal."[46]

Publicly, Baker held up the work of Walter Rauschenbusch as a theology which could lead to the church's acceptance of its "new social mission" which sought to "save man and his society." Baker's criticism of the old evangelism was that it had not been "selfless" enough. Rauschenberg's message had been to show that sin not only affects an individual's relationship to God but also his relationship to others. Repentance required the turning away from sin not for the sake of oneself alone but for the sake of the community in which he lived. In this human community, Christ was the ultimate exemplar. His life alone had given the pattern upon which the church could hope to "magnify" itself. That pattern called for a church which "touched its neighbors" thereby strengthening the community's "fragility of faith."[47]

Baker's own efforts at church planting show how seriously he took the question of community worship in the moral upbuilding of his society. Here his "righteous indignation," as Tarbell had called it, could be put to work providing communicants a sense of shared values and mutual responsibility. How could men be their brother's keeper, he wondered, if they did not know that they were brothers? What the church now needed were "Elijahs" willing to "imitate the life of Christ." This required risks and "sacrifice."[48]

Baker saw Woodrow Wilson as an Elijah offering Americans a course of action rooted in communitarian responsibility. Baker wrote that he was bewildered by the "fixity" of the President's "immovable faith" while feeling at the same time a certain "envy." He saw in the "certainty" of Wilson's "rock-like faith" the "creative impulse" with

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[45]Ray Stannard Baker, *The Spiritual Unrest* (New York, 1909), chs. 1 and 2, particularly 87-100.
[46]Ibid., 142 and 230. Also, Baker, Notebook "J," p. 116. Library of Congress.
[47]Baker, *The Spiritual Unrest*, 272-281.
[48]Baker, *American Chronicle*, 182-184. Also, Baker, Notebook "I," 104 and Notebook "L," 20.

which the new administration could defeat the powers of "bossism" and "venality," as well as the "wretched conditions which had become the American way of life."[49]

In one of his notebooks, Baker admitted to a certain lifelong agitation behind the creative energy of his work. He had never denied the "reality of spiritual things" or the "essential unity" of the "inner voice" available to all men. But what had that to do with Christ's personal call on his life, and the lives of others? It appeared that Christ "depended on us" for doing his work on the earth, he wrote. Christ had obtained a "unity with God" which Baker had desperately sought in his own life and which he had sought to make possible in the lives of others. A year before his death, he wrote that the effort had not been without its frustrations. "Each age," he supposed, "must worship its own thought of God." Baker remembered that as a boy, the "face" of God had ever been before him. As an adult, he feared, he would never see His face again. In old age, he saw God's handiwork everywhere about him.[50]

Lincoln Steffens and the McNamara Case

"I have been contending all my life," Lincoln Steffens wrote at the end of his autobiography, "and always with God." The man considered as pre-eminent of the muckraking writers, saw all the cities and states he had muckraked as being part of but a single story. "They had different names, dates and locations," he wrote, "but the essential facts were all described by Christ in the New Testament." Jesus had known the "worthlessness of the good people," Steffens was sure. Like Christ's, his had been a lifelong mission to save a world indifferent to life-giving instruction.[51]

A veteran newspaperman when he came to the *McClure's* group, Steffens crucified municipal government in "The Shame of the Cities" series. He reported how he had soured on the "best people" when he saw that "the law-abiding backbones of our society, in city after city, start out for moral reform, but turn back," when they saw it would cost them something. Christianity alone, he became convinced, provided the only possibility of real reform. It conveyed a faith, a hope, but more crucially a "vision" of how to act.[52]

As was the case with many of the other muckrakers, Steffens came to his moral sensibility early in life. His conversion seems to have

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[49]Ray Stannard Baker, *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, vol. 1 (Gloucester, 1960), 1-2, 13-14 and 21. Also, Baker, *American Chronicle*, 60, 92-93 and 176-178.

[50]Baker, Notebook VII, 149-153. Also, Notebook "L," 20. Also, Bannister, 119.

[51]Joseph Lincoln Steffens, *Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens* (New York, 1931), 523-526.

[52]Ibid., 525.

skipped a generation. Contemporaries described his grandfather, the Reverend Joseph Steffens, as a "bold defender of the faith once delivered to the saints." The parents of Lincoln Steffens, however, appear to have been nominal Christians who went to church out of "social habit." Nevertheless, Steffens took a liking to Sunday school and, under the moral instruction of a California neighbor, read the Bible seriously in his early and mid-teens, even planning a career in the ministry.[53]

Steffens' parents "followed his conversion patiently" as his intellect led him away from the institutional church. He was beginning to find that "even though the music was wet, the sermon was dry." Like Tarbell, he went to Europe, ostensibly to study, but not incidentally to find a more satisfactory basis for his faith. In Berlin, he attended a nondenominational American church and wrote home that he was becoming suspicious of "hot-house Christians." Those who had a "thoughtful comprehension of the full meaning and true spirit of Christ" had come to the knowledge gradually and reasonably. The following year he wrote his father from Heidelberg that he had received a letter from his sister, Dot, asking about becoming a Catholic. He urged restraint. Dot was in greater danger of rejecting the divinity of Christ, he wrote his father, than turning to the Catholics.[54]

The day before he died, Steffens, writing a preface to a collection of his works, said he always understood himself to be a "teacher." In the days in which he had "breathed the news" he had in mind giving his readers life-saving instruction. Speaking for the historical record, he argued that Old Testament writers were the original muckrakers. The trouble was, in New Testament times, ministers had never taught the true message of Christ to the Christians.[55]

Muckraking, Steffens once observed, had not gone far enough in proposing solutions to the corruption of the nation's political system. The problem was not to replace "bad men" with "good men" but to work for fundamental economic reforms that would prevent the perpetuation of a government of privilege. Steffens chafed under McClure's admonition to "find the facts" and to leave the interpretations to others. His career at *McClure's* and *American Chronicle* was characterized by his continuing efforts to have his colleagues recognize what he saw as fundamental to any campaign of reform.[56]

In December of 1909, he wrote his mother that he was finally com-

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[53]Ibid., 72. Also, Justin Kaplan, *Lincoln Steffens: A Biography* (New York, 1974), 22.

[54] Winter and Hicks, 11. Copy of letter from Lincoln Steffens to Lou Steffens. August 25, 1889. Also, 49. Copy of letter from Lincoln Steffens to Joseph Steffens, July 18, 1890.

[55]Joseph Lincoln Steffens, *Lincoln Steffens Speaking* (New York, 1936), ix. Also, Steffens, *Autobiography*, 375.

[56]Steffens, *Autobiography*, 375.

ing to terms with the "self-doubts" that had so long plagued his work. He was now working on the "biggest thing I've ever tackled." It would be a series of articles on the life of Jesus. "I want to tell Christians," he wrote her, "what their Christ said they should do." He admitted that while he could not "accept it all myself," he was prepared to show how Christ could "solve" the problems of the cities and their corrupt administrations. "I can't expect to convert the Christian Church to Christianity," he told her, "but I can show what would happen if they would but believe."[57]

The articles were never written, but Steffens' intentions are important in understanding his involvement in the McNamara case and its aftermath. The McNamara brothers had gone on trial in the fall of 1911 for the bombing of the Los Angeles*Times* building in which twenty-one persons had been killed. Steffens appears to have intervened in the brothers' behalf in part because of his friendship with their attorney, Clarence Darrow, but also because he thought by doing so he could focus international attention on the causes of the bombing and his plan to prevent future episodes of similar violence.

Steffens succeeded in obtaining a confession from the brothers, in exchange, he thought, for a ruling that all charges be dropped against them. His real scheme had been to lay before the court and the assembled press his notion that the "application of the Golden Rule" was crucial to future labor-business relations, for without it, the country ran the risk of perishing in civil strife. But the deal fell apart, James McNamara receiving a sentence of life imprisonment and his brother John, who had headed the Structural Iron Workers, receiving a sentence of six to twelve years. Steffens bitterly blamed the outcry from the churches on the eve of sentencing as turning the trend in public opinion against him and spent the rest of his life seeking pardons for the McNamaras.[58]

Before the trial he had observed that his "drift toward Christianity" had been triggered by his "systematic search" for remedies to the problem of city management. He had studied socialism, anarchism, the single tax, and "from time to time" the Bible. He was "amazed" at the teachings of Jesus. They seemed "new" to him. Jesus saw and understood, he wrote, what Christians did not. He knew the "evils" of society, and he knew their "cure." What was needed was spiritual renewal of the individual, leading to the application of the Golden Rule to so-

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[57] Winter and Hicks, 234-235. Copy of letter from Lincoln Steffens to Mrs. Joseph Steffens. December 21, 1909.

[58] There is an excellent summary of the impact of the McNamara case on Steffens in Russell M. Horton's *Lincoln Steffens* (New York, 1974), 83-86. See also, Steffens, *Autobiography*, 670-675.; and, Winter and Hicks, 286-288.

ciety.[59]

But the McNamara case had shown him he had misunderstood the enemy. Steffens' attack on the institutional church was far more severe than that of Baker and far more personal than that of his friend Upton Sinclair. The "Christian world" leaps on men when they are down, he sadly wrote. "We meant to have them forgiven," he said of the McNamaras, but "all the church wanted was their blood. It makes me sick." At the height of his disillusion, Steffens wrote his family, "I'm getting lots of letters from clergymen. They may be right. It is possible that Christianity will not work. I may have to admit it. If I must, I shall, you know."[60]

Steffens was now muckraked in the press under the title "Golden Rule Steffens." He retaliated by wearing a small gold cross from his watch chain, calling himself "the only Christian on earth." Even from his vantage point, many years after the experience, Steffens observed that Christianity could not be found in its churches. What they preached instead was "hate and disappointed revenge."[61]

Steffens' remaining years were spent courting Communism, finding it the only "true" Christianity, and in defending its "necessary" violence. His project on the life of Jesus remained unfinished, and an anticipated work on the life of Satan hardly was begun. He saw a consistency of outlook in the trail he had taken from muckraking to Marxism. "Religion" remained forever central to his thinking and work. "From religion my reason would never be emancipated," he observed late in life. "By it I was conformed to my generation and made to share its moral standards and ideals." Early assumptions concerning "good and evil," "virtue and vice" remained his mind's measure of all things and the framework for his entire endeavor.[62]

The Man with the "Christ Complex"

Shortly after the publication of Lincoln Steffens' *The Shame of the Cities*, the author received a visit in his office from Upton Sinclair. "What you report, " Sinclair told him, "is enough to make a complete picture of the system, but you seem not to see it. Don't you see it? Don't you see what you are showing?"[63]

Over the years, the two men's programs for reform were perhaps

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[59]Winter and Hicks, 243. Copy of letter from Lincoln Steffens to William Kent. April 19, 1910.

[60] Winter and Hicks, 243. Copy of letter from Lincoln Steffens to Laura Steffens. November 1911. Also, Winter and Hicks, 286. Copy of letter from Lincoln Steffens to Lou and Allen Suggett. December 24, 1911.

[61]Steffens, *Autobiography*, 688. Also, Horton, 85.

[62]Kaplan, 118.

[63]Steffens, *Autobiography*, 434-435.

more closely alike than any of the other muckrakers. While Sinclair stopped at socialism, Steffens went on to advocating communism as a means of solving the structural problems of capitalist society. Despite the divergence, the men maintained an active and respectful correspondence for more than thirty years. From the first they had shared a certain spiritual kinship. Still early in his career when Sinclair sent Steffens a copy of his *Cry for Justice*, Steffens understood it to be a "Bible for the faithful."[64]

Of the criticisms Sinclair suffered in his long career the one he received most gladly was the charge he suffered from a "Christ complex." "The world needs a Jesus," Sinclair reportedly answered without embarrassment, "more than it needs anything else."[65]

Like McClure, Tarbell, Baker, and Steffens, Sinclair lived into old age and left an autobiography to describe the impulses that formed his muckraking and led to the publication of *The Jungle*, his sensational indictment of the nation's meat-packing industry. Though he had always considered ancestors a "bore," Sinclair's relatives claimed royal descent from English roots and his great-grandfather was apparently Commodore Arthur Sinclair, who had fought in the first American naval battle after the Revolution as well as the War of 1812. In a biographical note, Sinclair would admit that a history of his ancestors read a little like "the history of the American Navy."[66]

By the time Sinclair was born in September of 1878, the family's fortunes had faded through the ravages of the Civil War and on "a sea of liquor." Sinclair's father came from a family in which four "gentlemen of the Old South" had turned drunks. His earliest memories were of his father going off as a whiskey salesman and coming home drunk. Sinclair remembered his boyhood homes as a succession of "sordid" rooming houses he shared with a status-seeking mother, who appeared determined to make him an Episcopal bishop. "I became a dreamer," he wrote. "When I was 17 I came to the conclusion that Providence must have some special purpose in keeping me in the world."[67]

It was an horrific world tied to his father's unending drinking cycles. Upton remembered the father's constant prayers seeking forgiveness, the father's ongoing promises that he would stay sober, and his heart-rending debacles. As an adolescent, Sinclair remembered fishing his father out of bars and hearing the old man say his salvation

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[64]Upton Sinclair, *My Lifetime in Letters*, (Columbia, Mo., 1960), 52. Copy of letter from Lincoln Steffens to Upton Sinclair. October 15, 1915.

[65]Steffens, *Autobiography*, 434-435.

[66]Upton Sinclair mss. Biographical Data Correspondence. 1814-1916. Box 1. Folder 1. Lilly Library. Indiana University. Bloomington, Indiana.

[67]Upton Sinclair, *Cup of Fury* (Great Neck, 1956), 12 and 13. Also, Upton Sinclair, *The Autobiography of Upton Sinclair*, (New York, 1962), 27.

had been "lost," because he had "fallen again."[68]

Sinclair saw those early years through the eyes of faith, it making him in life, by his own admission, a hopeless idealist. By fifteen he was an "ardent little Episcopal boy" teaching Sunday school classes at the Church of the Holy Communion in New York. He had gone to church every afternoon during Lent, "not because I was told to," he later wrote, "but because I wanted to." He had read his Bible "straight through," and while writing in his seventies remembered that "its language and imagery" had ever been "a part of me." The church had given him a "moral earnestness" to the problems of human life that formed the basis of his lifelong struggle for social justice.[69]

He had supported himself as a writer since the age of sixteen. In these early years he wrote his mother that he would see to it that they never again lived in vermine-infested rooming houses. He was making her a promise that he could keep. He assured her, "Whether you believe it or not, God's in heaven, who made this world." Sinclair wondered if He knew "what this life is all about anyhow." He hoped that there might be "a higher motive in this world than the love of money" and "a higher end than getting it."[70]

Sinclair wrote dime novels for cheap magazines to help finance his schooling at the City College of New York and Columbia University. It was there he began his lifelong "lover's quarrel" with the church, it producing in 1918 *The Profits of Religion.* Whether muckraking the churches or the meat-packing industry, Sinclair measured all men by his "impossibly high standards of honor, continence, honesty, Christianity and truthfulness." He observed, "We have a continent with a hundred million educated people, materially prosperous but spiritually starving. I would be willing to wager that if I announced I had a visit from God last night and I communicated a new revelation from it, I could have a temple, a university, and a million dollars within five years at the outside."[71] Sinclair privately wrote that he felt he had been born "to reform." He told fellow muckraker Edwin Markham, "I want to give every second of my time and of my thought and every ounce of my energy to the worship of my God and to the uttering of the unspeakable message that I know he has given me." His muckraking attack in *The Jungle* had been a part of that message. He "poured" into it all the "tears and anguish and pain" that he had known in life. His

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[68]Sinclair, *Cup of Fury*, 20-21.

[69]Ibid., 14-15.

[70]Sinclair mss. Box 1. Folder 5. Copy of letter from Upton Sinclair to Priscilla Sinclair (1894-18).

[71]Sinclair mss. Box 1. Folder 2. "Little Known Facts About Well-Known People," an article by Dale Carnegie. Also, Sinclair, *Autobiography*, 31. Also, Leon Harris, *Upton Sinclair: American Rebel* (New York, 1975), 11-14.

Cry for Justice, written in 1915, was an anthology of social protest, that could serve as a "Bible" for the "discouraged and wounded" in their struggle against the economic institutions which oppressed them.[72]

One of those institutions, as he saw it, was the church. And while Sinclair never abandoned his belief that organized religion was a bastion of "predatory, capitalist interests," this opinion never led him to abandon his personal faith in God, nor his certainty that Christ's teachings were the ultimate way to social betterment. God had given him "a vision of a world without poverty and war," where "God's children" would not be destroyed. His career had been a cautious labor to "make that vision real to my fellow men." It was a vision of a better world, in which "courage, resolution and hope" animated the activities of men in their behavior to other men. That was the only real hope for civic betterment. Sinclair was sure God had put him on the earth to give this one message to his fellow man. That "work" had for a lifetime been his all-consuming passion.[73]

The Man with the Hoe

"I have a deep interest in your social gospel," the muckraking poet Edwin Markham wrote Upton Sinclair in May of 1910, "but I think you push it a little too far into the front of the stage."[74]

Despite the admonishment, Markham shared the thrust of Sinclair's social criticism and agreed with Baker and William Allen White that God "required cooperation" in bringing about change in the relations between business and labor and that central to that teaming was the application of the Golden Rule. The publication of his "Man with the Hoe" in 1899 won him worldwide recognition as a fighter in behalf of the working man. The poem itself was heralded as the "battle-cry of the next thousand years."[75] It led to the publication in 1900 of a collection of Markham's poetry and a separate volume which included the famous poem and his commentary on it. Both were publications of the Doubleday and McClure Company and reflected the underlying assumptions of much of the muckraking press in its infancy.

Clearly, Markham saw himself in Millet's depiction of a worker "bowed by the weight of centuries" and leaning over his hoe with the "emptiness of ages in his face" and the "burden of the world" on his back. The youngest child of pioneering parents, Markham never knew

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[72]Sinclair, *Autobiography,* 112. Also, Harris, 171. Also, Upton Sinclair, *The Cry for Justice: An Anthology of Social Protest* (New York, 1915), 18.

[73]Sinclair, *Autobiography,* 55. Also, Sinclair, *Cup of Fury,* 16. Harris, 168.

[74]Sinclair, *Letters,* 96. Letter from Edwin Markham to Upton Sinclair. May 26, 1910.

[75]Louis Filler, *The Unknown Edwin Markham* (Yellow Springs, Ohio, 1966), ch. 5. Also, William L. Stidger, *Edwin Markham* (New York, 1933), ch. 6.

his father and quarreled with his mother during "lonely years" of farm and ranch work in Lagoon Valley, California. He saw himself one of the "hoemanry" who worked under "hard and incorrigible conditions." The "smack of the soil" and the "whir of the forge" had ever been in his "blood."[76] What the hoeman represented to Markham, and by extension to other muckrakers of like-minded faith, was a "type of industrial oppression" found in "all lands and labors." The hoeman was the "symbol of betrayed humanity, the toiler ground down through ages of oppression, through ages of social injustice." His stooped image became a rallying cry for abolishing the "awful degradation of man through endless, hopeless and joyless labor."[77]

It was not the mere poverty of the industrial worker that Markham deplored "but the impossibility of escape from its killing frost." The only solution lay in the recognition of "Christ's work of public and organic righteousness." It was through that work that He sought to save both man and society from themselves. Work was "good" only if it was done "in the passion of joy." Men had achieved political liberty, but now they must follow the example of Christ if they were to achieve "industrial freedom." That freedom would only come when "we realize that I am my brother's keeper." Out of that realization would come "cooperation," which Markham, and then White after him, would describe as the "logic of Christianity."[78]

In the thirty-five year career as lecturer following the publication of "Man with the Hoe," Markham continued to call for moral regeneration as the fountainhead for greater social justice. What had been the "purpose of Christ," he asked, "if not the realization of fraternity." That was the "holiest of all words," the word that carried with it the "essence of the gospels" and the "fulfillment of all revelations."[79]

In forty years of writing, Markham never achieved the impact he had with his critique of industrial relations. His work on "Lincoln, the Man of the People," as well as his crusade against child labor in *The Children of Bondage,* continued his passionate call for social justice, while collections published through 1920, particularly "The Shoes of Happiness" and "The Gates of Paradise," reflected his continuing assertion that man needed to cooperate with a "divine strategy" if he hoped to live a better life.[80]

In a private notebook, Markham recorded that it was "injustice"

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[76]Edwin Markham, *The Man with the Hoe* (New York, 1900), 19.

[77]Ibid., 23.

[78]Ibid., 32, 37-39 and 45-47.

[79]Ibid., 47.

[80]Edwin Markham, *Lincoln and Other Poems* (New York, 1901). Also, Edwin Markham, *The Shoes of Happiness and Other Poems* (Garden City, 1932, originally 1913). Also, Edwin Markham, *The Gates of Paradise and Other Poems* (Garden City, 1920).

that he had "detested most." Men must learn that the only solution to the problem was the "carrying of the Christ-purpose in the heart" or what he called the "inbrothering of men for the common good." He was sure that "in a generation" the application of just such a principle would "cure all our social sorrows." The church should join the writers of the day in pushing a "spirit of reform." He observed, "the saving of men's souls is very closely connected with the amelioration of their social and industrial conditions." The church in the new century needed more than anything else "a baptism of the Holy Spirit," which he believed was the same as saying, "Social Spirit."[81]

A Theory of Spiritual Progress

Nowhere does the social spirit find a greater champion than William Allen White, the sage of Emporia, Kansas, who first came to the McClure group in 1897 with the publication of his "Boyville" stories and who stayed on the national scene as a publicist for progressive causes for more than forty years. It was during his first trip to the East that White had lunch with Theodore Roosevelt at the Army and Navy club, quickly falling under "the Great Man's spell." What followed was a highly public twenty-year career which White understood as service to the "moral vision" the two men shared. This vision recognized that a "social evolution" was already underway in America and needed to be encouraged by national policymakers. White saw it as a "step-at-a-time process to secure for the working classes, better environment in playgrounds, schools, housing, wages and shop conditions." He reasoned that "after a generation or two of workers bred in the newer, cleaner environment, a new vision will come to the workers -- a vision which will justly solve the inequalities of the capitalist system." Unlike Steffens and Sinclair, White remained convinced that "capital may be harnessed for the common good as well as for private greed."[82]

How that "harnessing" would occur is best described in White's epistle, *A Theory of Spiritual Progress*, published in 1910. White wrote that although the world was hardly a "chocolate eclair" there could be no denying that life on the planet was "outward bound." The choice between life as an "eternal grind" and an "eternal journey" was lived in the context of a society where "the public sense of evildoing was widening." This was a good sign, because "cruelty becomes intolerable

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[81]Edwin Markham Scrapbook. "The Markham Book." January 1894. Box 3455. Library of Congress. Washington, D.C. Also, an article he wrote for the New York *Times*, appearing October 21, 1899, and an interview with the San Francisco *Bulletin*, appearing December 30, 1900, in Box 3455.

[82]William Allen White, *The Autobiography of William Allen White* (New York, 1946), 300. Also, William Allen White, Letterbook. September 20, 1913. A letter from William Allen White to Fred D. Warren. Container B29, pt. 2. Library of Congress.

as men become aware that it exists." As the "sensibilities" of the common man grew, his capacity for "kindness" grew. His goodwill broadened. His fellow man benefited. People insisted on the passage of laws more closely approximating patterns of social justice. This was the core of White's theory of "spiritual progress."[83]

The theory visualized the working out of Darwinian evolution in societal terms based on the Golden Rule and the character of Jesus Christ. In 1914, White wrote that he believed the world was "growing better" because it was becoming "more and more capable of understanding the social and spiritual message of Jesus Christ." It seemed to him that society was coming to recognize what he had long seen -- "that Christ is not only the living God, but the only true growing God in all the world."[84]

White's spiritual intensity appears to have come from his mother, even as his spiritual unrest appears to have been drawn from a conflict lived out between his parents.[85] White's mother had been an early convert to anti-slavery Republicanism, who had moved while a teenager with a Congregational family to Galesburg, Illinois. There she witnessed the Lincoln-Douglas debate, falling "platonically in love" for a lifetime with Lincoln. It took ten years of hard work to get her education at Knox College, where she sat under the teaching of Dr. Albert Hurd, the man whose daughter would marry White's sometime boss -- S.S. McClure.[86]

White's father was a lifelong Democrat, interested in the political life of Kansas. For a time, he had even served as the mayor of a small town, Eldorado. He had little use for his wife's campaign to civilize their only child, by encouraging his church activities and by reading to him out of the Good Book at night. White idealized his schooling on the Kansas plains. "We sang gospel hymns every morning," he wrote, "and the teacher read a chapter in the Bible. There was no nonsense about that. For we were all little Protestants. She made us say the Lord's prayer after Bible reading, and then we were all started off right for the day. At noon we sang another gospel hymn and loved it."[87]

White's own conversion came during his college days. He called it the "night of the light." It left him with a sense that even if the higher criticism be right, and much of the Bible a "myth," there was no getting around who Jesus Christ was. To White's mind, Jesus was the

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[83]William Allen White, *A Theory of Spiritual Progress* (Emporia, 1910), 3, 13, 15, 24 and 36.

[84]William Allen White, Letterbook. June 3, 1914. A letter from William Allen White to Rev. Clifford Cole. Container B29, pt. 2.

[85]Sally Griffith, *Home Town News* (New York, 1988), ch. 1, particularly p. 28, and ch. 4, particularly 169-179. My thanks to Ms. Griffith for giving me an advanced copy of her manuscript.

[86]White, *Autobiography*, 6-7.

[87]Ibid., 38.

"greatest hero in history." Human happiness was achieved only to the degree people "made His philosophy a part of human institutions." Jesus had died to save the world by "demonstrating through His crucifixion and the symbol of his resurrection the indestructibility of truth."[88]

The essence of White's social gospel appears to have stemmed from his conviction that the simple application of the Golden Rule in human affairs would regenerate the social order. "I think the job of the church today," he wrote, "is to make a public opinion that will so revolutionize our industry, commerce, and political life that it will be possible for a man to live a generous, useful Christian life without hurt or harm to himself or his family."[89]

While he preached a message of spiritual reconciliation, White, like many of the publicists for progressivism, had a hard time reconciling the old familiar faith with the relativism of the new moral order. The churches were failed institutions. He had only gone to them as a lad, he snapped, to meet pretty girls, and had continued going as a father because he thought it might be good for his children. But a preacher's business was not "any more exalted" as a "calling" than was the work of the newspaperman. The purpose of both, he charged in *The Old Order Changeth,* was to recognize that in the "daily struggle for existence" God was nevertheless "fulfilling himself" in the affairs of man. The growth of democratic institutions had been "God-inspired." The "upward direction" of social change had proved there was a "director."[90]

Theodore Roosevelt had been "God's man" because he had "kept the faith" while serving as a role model for how the twentieth-century man should act in his relations to other men. He had encouraged the development of the "hero" in every person and in so doing had demonstrated that the "kingdom of God is within us." The revolution from "kings to capitalism" had been but one step in an evolutionary process at work in the human community.[91] Now democracy was "seeking to control capital." Roosevelt had shown a way of "expanding people's vision" to what democracy was about. Democracy was the playing out of the "self-abnegation of the Christian life" and was the greatest movement "in all of our national life."[92]

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[88]Ibid., 108.

[89]John DeWitt McKee, *William Allen White: Maverick on Main Street* (Westport, 1975), 199-200.

[90]William Allen White, Letterbook. November 23, 1914. A letter from William Allen White to Eugene Bryan. Library of Congress.

[91]William Allen White, *The Old Order Changeth* (New York, 1910), 251 and 263.

[92]Walter Johnson, ed., *Selected Letters of William Allen White: 1899-1943* (New York, 1947), 34 and 97. Also, White, *The Old Order Changeth,* 3-4 and 229-238. Also, McKee, 198-203.

Progressivism and Pessimism

White's pre-war assertion that the "worker for good will is paid in eternity" and that "righteousness exalted a nation" as the "divine spark" burned "in every soul" may have seemed like wearied rhetoric to the generation of the twenties. White continued to chronicle the great men and movements of his time, always reshaping them in his image of the past. "What a God-damned world this is!" he wrote Baker, following Harding's election. "Starvation on the one hand, and indifference on the other, pessimism rampant, faith quiescent, murder met with indifference, the lowered standard of civilization faced with universal complaisance, and the whole story so sad that nobody can tell it. If anyone had told me ten years ago that our country would be what it is today, and that the world would be what it is today, I should have questioned his reason."[93]

In 1925, White wrote *Some Cycles of Cathay*, a work that fairly summarized much of the thinking and many of the fears of that remarkable group of men and women who had fought with their pens for progressive purposes for more than a generation. He claimed that his belief in democratic growth under the influence of the Christian philosophy as expressed in the teachings of Christ and the Golden Rule remained unshakeable. It alone provided a framework which dignified "individual humanity." That had been his message all along.[94]

White and his contemporaries remained convinced that there was a "moral purpose behind man's destiny." People still needed to learn that central fact. The cycle in which people now lived had sadly shown that "men will not take truth except through force and at a terrible cost." But eventually they must be made to see that the only hope for the human community lay in recognizing "the destiny God has given us." That destiny must continue to be known to them by writers of the new generation. It was a destiny in which all people could progress "together" or not at all, for they could live "by faith" which would sustain a "larger vision" or they would succumb to the "chaos" around them.[95]

White's hope, and the hope of his fellow foot-soldiers, was that social justice would become a permanent part of economic and political institutions as people came to develop the "Christ" that was in them. This belief was a complex of many ideas, most central of which were the writers' own evangelical upbringings, the impact of Darwinian evolution and the higher criticism on that belief, and the lifelong

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[93]Johnson, 213. Copy of letter from William Allen White to Ray Stannard Baker. December 8, 1920.
[94]William Allen White, *Some Cycles of Cathay* (Chapel Hill, 1925), preface and 16-23.
[95]Ibid., 23, 60 and 87-88.

struggle which then emerged to integrate their faith to the social problems their generation encountered. What makes their work all the more remarkable was that it sprang from the crucible of the writers' own spiritual and intellectual struggles, yet became translated into a social program designed to solve the fundamental injustices of their era.

The paradox of the progressive program the muckrakers espoused was that many of them wondered whether it could really be made to work. These men and women who earnestly tried to teach other men and women to be their brother's keeper remained lifelong pupils themselves. Their lives were experiments in man's personal struggle with God and his social relationship to other men.

The St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* Campaign Against Radio's Middle Commercials

By Michael D. Murray*

Concerns by newspaper publishers over radio excess in borrowing news from the print medium while taking liberties with newspaper standards were expressed as early as the 1930s. The sentiment underlying what became known as the "press-radio war" was once summed up by James. G. Stahlman, publisher of the Nashville *Banner* and president of the Southern Newspaper Publisher's Association, who admonished colleagues: "Newspaper publishers had better wake up or newspapers will be nothing but a memory on a tablet at Radio City."[1] Radio reported news initially from print sources. This reporting almost exclusively at the expense of American newspapers was hard for publishers to accept. With developments of the 1930s, suddenly the impact of radio as a medium competing for advertising dollars began to be felt and created even more dissatisfaction. Many newspaper people attempted strong measures to stem competition, and the information "war" ensued over sources of news. These attempts to limit access to information have been well documented, but what has received far less attention is the fact that in some quarters publishers were also expressing concerns over the increasing commercialization of radio news. This study traces the premier effort to rid the airwaves of commercials inserted into the middle of radio newscasts, the so-called middle commercials.

Some newspaper publishers worried that radio, which had developed as an entertainment medium, would fail to adopt standards appropriate to the news business. Meanwhile, the medium was growing in importance among listeners. As a consequence, some stations such as NBC affiliate KSD radio in St. Louis adopted the policies of its parent

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1Quoted in Eric Barnouw, *A Tower in Babel* (New York: 1966), 278. For a discussion of the press-radio war see Sammy R. Danna, "The Press-Radio War," Freedom of Information Center Report No. 213, School of Journalism, University of Missouri-Columbia, December, 1968, 1-7.

Pulitzer Publishing in setting up standards for news advertising at the urging of Joseph Pulitzer II.[2] Owned and operated by the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* Company, KSD frequently suspended commercial advertising to report important news developments during World War II. The station eliminated all advertising for a 24-hour period in June 1944, when the allied invasion of France took place. Also, in December of that year, when a two-day pressman's strike hit the St. Louis daily newspapers, KSD presented all material from pages prepared for the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* -- except for commercial advertisements. Later, when the network alerted the country of Franklin Roosevelt's death in April 1945, the station devoted three full days and nights to memorial tributes without commercial interruption.[3]

In instances in which advertisements might intrude on the solemnity or seriousness of an important war-related news event, they were omitted. This policy was in keeping with other efforts to support the war by using established guidelines from the Office of War Information. During the war years radio advertising nearly doubled when advertisers sought evasion of excess profits taxes not applicable to print because of paper shortages.[4] At the same time, the federal government encouraged radio advertising growth to offset war profits and encourage growth in the economy. By the end of the war, radio listeners would recognize the marked increase in advertising. At the same time a precedent had been set -- important news and public affairs programming would get priority treatment on radio which was developing as a predominantly entertainment medium.

Some stations such as KSD did not allow commercial interruption of newscasts -- viewing them as breaks in editorial continuity. In 1945 the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* started an editorial campaign advocating the elimination of all middle commercials, those placed in the middle of radio newscasts. The timing of the effort, during a period when war casualties were a dominant feature of the news, was further enhanced by the policy of KSD to turn down advertising it considered distasteful or excessive such as proprietary medicine accounts.[5] The campaign against "excess" in radio advertising began on January 18, 1945. Joseph Pulitzer II urged Ralph Coghlan, editor of the editorial page of the *Post-Dis-*

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[2] James Lawrence, personal interview with author, September 30, 1987. See also "Lawrence is Your Man: James Lawrence Speaks Out and Looks Back on 12,000 Editorials," *St. Louis Journalism Review*, June, 1988, 10-11.

[3] The radio networks were establishing credibility for reporting political and war-related coverage. NBC News had transported listeners overseas a total of 7,838 times from January 1, 1942 until December 1, 1945. Quoted in Jan Ansell, Jr., "The Story of a Station: The History of Radio Station WDAF," Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Missouri-Columbia, 1950, 130. For specifics on suspension of KSD advertising see L. Clark Secrest, "The History of Radio Station KSD, St. Louis," Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Missouri-Columbia, 1961, 177.

[4] J. Mimlott, "Public Service Advertising: The Advertising Council," *Public Opinion Quarterly* (1948), 211.

[5] James Lawrence, interview with author, September 30, 1987.

patch, to take up the issue of radio commercialism. As a result, the newspaper ran a lengthy editorial accompanied by a Daniel Fitzpatrick cartoon calling it "Time for Radio Networks to Come of Age."[6] The editorial asked NBC, CBS, Mutual, and the Blue Network to (1) quit inserting commercial plugs in news broadcasts and (2) eliminate objectionable advertisers from the airwaves. Pointing to the major sporting events being reported by radio, the editorial questioned the appropriateness of having news broadcasts peppered "by the appeals of patent medicine or cosmetic advertising."[7] The editorial cited a decision by another major station, WJR of Detroit, to ban middle commercials.

WJR used the war effort to establish the importance of radio news. Station Manager Leo J. Fitzpatrick said that "the public today listens to radio news with reverence and solemnity," calling it "one of the most important show windows of radio."[8] The WJR executive clearly viewed the ban as an opportunity to establish a certain level of dignity with his listenership. The *Post-Dispatch*'s station, KSD, clearly shared that view. It had established a policy the preceding year to avoid broadcast of news sponsored by personal products such as "palliatives for bodily aches and pains, stomach acidity and gas, body odors, enlarged pores, bad breath and a thousand and one equally revolting subjects."[9] This policy of turning away advertising considered unfit or not suitable for public airing was consistent with the *Post-Dispatch* policy and an attempt by Pulitzer Publishing and Joseph Pulitzer II in particular, to discriminate between entertainment and news programming with respect to the placement of commercials. The January 18 editorial called on the radio networks to take a leadership role and "avoid the cheap commercialism associated with mixing laxatives and liberation," as the message suggested by the accompanying editorial cartoon in which a listener was bombarded with a mixture of pills and war casualties.

Eighteen days after this first editorial, the *Post-Dispatch* ran a second lead editorial on this subject. It summed up the response received since its initial call for wiping out the middle commercials which were dubbed "plug-uglies" by editorial writer James Lawrence, author of the editorials on the subject. Lawrence had been brought over to the *Post-Dispatch* editorial page from KSD Radio. The editor sought a writer experienced in radio broadcasting. According to Lawrence:

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[6] " A Suggestion to Radio," St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*, January 18, 1945, 2B.

[7] Ibid. KSD Radio claimed to have cancelled or refused more than $100,000 in undesirable accounts – from advertisers insisting on commercials to be inserted in newscasts. See "Advice to Radio," *Time*, January 29, 1945, 69.

[8] Ibid.

[9] See Daniel W. Pfaff, "Joseph Pulitzer II and Advertising Censorship, 1929-1939," *Journalism Monographs*, (July 1982), 18-19.

> [Coghlan] called me over for advice and after I talked to him for about a half-hour he said:"Well, you know a lot more about this than I do. There's a typewriter, you sit down and write the editorial.". . .
>
> So I sat down and wrote an editorial that was in the next day's paper with hardly a change in it. So he then invited me to join the editorial page which I did, briefly, and I wrote those editorials on bad taste commercialism and it became quite a nationwide affair.[10]

The national debate over commercialism in radio news had begun. A *Post-Dispatch* follow-up piece reviewed coverage received from *Time, Newsweek,* and other elements of the press and radio, including the print trade publication *Editor and Publisher.* The broadcast trade magazine *Broadcasting* referred to Lawrence as "the editorial writer who writes with a bag over his head,"[11] ignoring demands of the field. On this occasion the *Post-Dispatch* also included letters of support and encouragement from Federal Communications Commissioner Ray C. Wakefield, the president of the Association of Radio News Analysts, John W. Vandercook, and celebrated commentator Raymond Gram Swing. Swing's contract on the Blue Network specified that his program not be interrupted by middle commercials.[12] In a letter to the *Post-Dispatch,* Swing reported on his 1940 revolt against what he termed "jarring interruptions" and the "hideous" mixture of sales talk with his report on Nazi violation of Belgian, Dutch, and French neutrality while reporting for the Mutual Network. The network supported Swing's stand; and he, obviously, applauded steps called for by the *Post-Dispatch* and KSD Radio.

The newspaper continued to pound away on the issue. Another accompanying editorial cartoon entitled "The Sublime and the Ridiculous" hastened the call for additional action by major stations and the networks. Taking the argument of good taste a step further, *Broadcasting* asked whether the patience of listeners "with rude and ill-timed interruptions" would be able to tolerate these commercials once the need for war information abated. *Broadcasting* editorialized that it thought not.[13]

As the campaign gained momentum nationally, divergent views began to surface. The four major radio networks expressed a reluctance to follow the editorial lead, preferring to let local stations decide this

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[10] James Lawrence, interview with author, September 30, 1987. See also "Lawrence is Your Man," *St. Louis Journalism Review,* June, 1988, 10-11.

[11] Ibid.

[12] See "Two Leading Commentators Take Their Stand," St. Louis *Post-Dispatch,* February 5, 1945, 2B.

[13] Quoted in "Newscast Cleanup Moves Forward," St. Louis *Post-Dispatch,* February 5, 1945, 2B.

issue for themselves. Network chiefs argued, for example, that the management of local stations made the decisions on commercial advertising time. They also cited lack of public response to the campaign as an indicator that this was a trade issue and one without popular support.

The *Post-Dispatch* subsequently featured an article on Sunday, February 18, 1945, providing network feedback on the controversial plan to eliminate middle commercials and unsavory ads.[14] The networks generally maintained that there was nothing inappropriate with the placement of ads provided it was clear to the listeners that no relationship existed between products and people, as long as the timing was proper, and that the ads contained nothing reprehensible. CBS said it reserved the right to eliminate the middle commercials if the nature of the news made it difficult to break to an announcement. The network reported very positive feedback from listeners and affiliate stations when that had been the case in past instances. Columbia was said to be particularly sensitive to issues related to news presentation because of the confusion and public outcry over its well-known broadcast of Orson Welles' "War of the Worlds." Dr. Frank Stanton, CBS administrative vice president, reported that, as a consequence, even dramatic programs were examined by the network, to avoid misleading listeners. Stanton also pointed to a CBS policy statement from ten years earlier addressing the issue of personal ads for body cleansing and sanitary products which were also carefully scrutinized before being accepted for broadcast.[15] Meanwhile, NBC President Niles Trammell told the *Post-Dispatch* that he thought the issues raised in the campaign against middle commercials required a great deal more research, although he said he agreed in principle with any effort to improve service to the public.[16]

Also receiving some attention from the network bosses was the related issue of having announcers go from reporting an important news event to delivering a commercial announcement, a practice that had been abandoned in many quarters even at that early stage in radio history. NBC's Trammell went on to point out that many of radio's celebrated voices, including H.V. Kaltenborn and Lowell Thomas, had banished the middle announcements years before.[17] Concluding his statement to the *Post-Dispatch*, Trammell suggested that the issue be

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[14] "Radio Chains Don't Want Reform," St. Louis *Post Dispatch*, February 18, 1945, 3A.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Kaltenborn experienced a great deal of difficulty with commercial sponsorship early in his career. When sponsored by General Mills, he was required to read middle commercials but insisted on writing them himself and making them more of an institutional endorsement. See Irving Fang, *Those Radio Commentators!* (Ames, Iowa: 1977), 29, and David G. Clark, "H.V. Kaltenborn and the Sponsor's Role," *Journal of Broadcasting* 12 (1968), 309-321.

submitted to the Code Authority of the National Association of Broadcasters for further study and action.

In a follow-up editorial two days later, "Networks Trail the Parade," the *Post-Dispatch* credited individual stations in Detroit, Milwaukee, Indianapolis, and Ashland, Kentucky, along with KFRE Radio in Fresno, California, for their efforts to deal with the problem by supporting the campaign.[18] It also applauded the enthusiastic reception KFRE advertisers gave to the policy and noted that it was only a minority of fringe advertisers who found it not to their liking. These arguments were coupled with a plea to acknowledge that the networks were giving up their leadership function to local stations by their failure to adopt industry-wide standards. In addition, this editorial cited the support of the leading broadcast editor of the day, Jack Gould of the New York *Times*, who provided an additional favorable opinion.

Some sources claimed that advertisers would seek other outlets if such a plan were implemented. Gould labeled these kinds of claims "utter poppycock." He argued that the plan would have little or no economic impact. Gould concluded by pointing to the separation of news and commercial advertising in a newspaper context. He advanced the argument that radio had progressed in the maturity of its news operations to support implementation, thus putting aside "the indiscretions of youth."[19] A month later NBC announced its decision to eliminate middle commercials from newscasts, thus, at least temporarily, supporting the *Post-Dispatch* stand.[20]

When the federal government was pressed by major newspapers and broadcasters to respond to the debate, the chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, Paul Porter, expressed the need for broadcasters to clean up their own house on this issue, saying that the commission lacked the authority to abate what he termed "nuisance practices."[21] He also recounted recent legislative attempts by Senator Burton K. Wheeler of Montana to prohibit commercial endorsement and all commercial sponsorship of broadcast news. Porter applauded the efforts of the *Post-Dispatch* but made it known that requirements regarding the appropriateness of commercialism in news programming was not the domain of the FCC. He added that, as an admirer of the *Post-Dispatch*, he was impressed by both the newspaper's efforts and the endorsement of the trade publication, *Broadcasting*.

Major advertisers, for the most part, remained quiet. They let the broadcasters do their talking; and most of the major network represen-

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[18] "Networks Trail the Parade," St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*, February 20, 1945, 2B.

[19] Jack Gould, "Plug-Uglies' Campaign for Improved News Broadcasts Reflect a Broader Plan," New York *Times*, February 18, 1945, x7.

[20] See "And Now We Bring You . . . ," *Newsweek*, March 26, 1945.

[21] Raymond B. Brandt, "Radio Plug-Uglies Poor Business, Justin Miller, New President of N.A.B. Warns Station Executives," St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*, October 3, 1945, 1C.

tatives cited not only the need to remain independent of what they regarded as a local controversy, but also expressed the desire for restraint in viewing the specific applications of the proposal. Blue Network President Mark Woods suggested that commercial copy be studied in instances in which an indiscretion might occur. He argued that the need to cut commercials was seldom required unless the "continuity of thought" was altered by an intruding commercial message.

Mutual Broadcasting's Edgar Kobak also argued that he saw no use for prejudice against news accounts simply because of the nature of the products but added that issuing of war news on his network would almost certainly result in the discontinuance of commercials, regardless of the product. Kobak called for additional study and predicted that eventually middle commercials would be abolished. He thanked the *Post-Dispatch* in the public's behalf.[22]

For its part, the *Post-Dispatch* continued to raise questions. On Monday, April 16, 1945, the newspaper reiterated its position, one it claimed was misinterpreted in many quarters. It said, for example, that a speech by the then president of the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) had misconstrued the intent of the campaign as a more general attack on broadcast news. The *Post-Dispatch* offered a clarification in another editorial, which was published as an advertisement in various trade publications including *Radio Daily*. In addition to earlier points regarding the newspaper's editorial stand, the *Post-Dispatch* pointed out how many major companies including Standard Oil of Indiana had adopted policies in line with the ban against "plug-uglies."

The initiator and leading proponent of the campaign continued to reinforce its position. The *Post-Dispatch*'s summary statement on the issue was set out as follows:

> The plug-ugly, we hold, is neither good broadcasting nor good advertising. New is news and the public is entitled to hear it reported with dignity and good taste. We hold that the radio industry whose function it is to serve the 'public interest, convenience and necessity' has far more to gain than to lose by eliminating the newscast plug-ugly -- lock, stock and barrel. If radio did so, it would fortify the great and fundamental principle of freedom of the air.[23]

It looked like that would be the last word on the "plug-ugly" debate that would come from the newspaper; but soon recommendations from other broadcasting quarters were issued, calling for a closer look and vindicating the *Post-Dispatch* on its strong stand.

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[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid.

The *Post-Dispatch* reprinted a "Letter to the Editor" from broadcast manager Rex Howell,[24] a member of the NAB News Committee that drafted proposals for improved news programs. Howell's remarks included many compliments to the newspaper in the face of what he termed anti-radio papers that had seized on the controversy as a means of damaging competitors. As a follow-up KSD Radio continued to address the issue it had raised. It did so by examining public statements by government officials including members of the F.C.C., thus avoiding the opportunity of being misconstrued by counterparts as serving a special interest.

FCC Chairman Paul Porter's attack against excessive commercialism on radio, entitled "Radio Must Grow Up," was published in the October issue of *American Magazine* and reprinted in the *Post-Dispatch*. Porter, a native Missourian, instructed broadcasters on the need to improve the medium with particular attention to current programming or what he called "Neurotic Twaddle." He discussed the role broadcast advertisements play in everyday American life and provided a short comparison to the BBC. The *Post-Dispatch* also included excerpts from Porter's article that did not make it into the pages of the magazine. He discussed some of radio's shortcomings including an overemphasis on the dominant ratings service of that day, concluding "There is more to life and radio than a Crosley rating. The broadcaster has often argued it is not his function to 'reform' public taste, but be that as it may, it certainly is the broadcaster's function not to lower it."[25]

The St. Louis newspaper restated its stand on the issue once again after a lengthy review of Paul Porter's assessment of radio's status. The review was augmented with a Daniel Fitzpatrick editorial cartoon with Porter standing on top of a huge microphone, screaming an announcement while airborne. In the aftermath of his discussion of radio, one of his frequent adversaries on the FCC, Clifford Durr, in a speech in New York City, agreed with Porter's denunciation. Durr, while applauding radio's efforts to report the news, condemned the medium in instances in which "unfortunately, news of the greatest importance is sometimes overwhelmed and deprived of its significance by the commercial advertisements which precede, interrupt and follow it."[26]

In the wake of Porter's denunciation and Durr's expression of support for that view, additional voices were heard. The next week, the newly installed president of the NAB, Justin Miller, denounced plug-uglies at a meeting of radio station owners in Washington, D.C. He assailed the ads as poor business practice and called for a greater degree

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[24] "A Radio Man on Plug-Ugly Campaign," St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*, June 7, 1945, 2B, reprinted in *Broadcasting*, June 18, 1945, 8.

[25] Paul A. Porter, "Radio Must Grow Up," St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*, September 16, 1945, 1D.

[26] Ibid.

of self-discipline among the owners. The speech was an elaboration of an earlier letter Miller had sent to the *Post-Dispatch* while he was still a member of the U.S. Court of Appeals. In that earlier view, Miller asserted himself on behalf of the newspaper's stand on the issue, stating: "There is no reason why a newscast should be interrupted by a plug-ugly than that such ads should be inserted in the middle of news stories or in editorials in a newspaper; especially when the interruption -- deliberately or unconscious, whatever it may be -- is in nauseating contrast to the subject under discussion by the commentator."[27] FCC Chairman Porter, who also spoke at that event, commended the NAB in its selection of Miller as president and indicated that this was a symbolic gesture on the part of the association to clean up the airwaves. He added that Miller's record demonstrated that American broadcasters had "no desire to rest upon past achievements but face tomorrow with hope and confidence in themselves and the people they serve."[28]

The final speaker at the meeting, the retiring FCC boss, defended the broadcasters, saying that although there had been some concern over commercialization, peacetime broadcasting would assure that the listener's needs would be served at the local level. He also pointed to the NAB Code as a means of assuring the maintenance of high standards and the needs of the community served. He praised the role of commercial advertising in the distribution of goods and services at a critical juncture for the country. Beyond this, he said that American broadcasting had demonstrated its role as providing the best system of broadcasting. Clearly, the tactics of commercial advertisers and program practices of his counterparts in the NAB were far from ugly. In addition, the organization held the potential to provide supervisory assistance or advice in instances when broadcasters failed to use discretion.

When the Radio News Committee of the NAB issued recommendations on post-war news coverage, the *Post-Dispatch* expected a major bit of attention to be paid to commercialization. The editorial staff discovered that the term "plug-uglies"appeared nowhere in the report. Instead, the document contained recommendations concerning the need to provide competent, thorough, and speedy news coverage, more local coverage, and a change of reference from news processing to "reporting." Commercialism was not addressed in the report; and, according to the *Post-Dispatch*, the committee preparing the report on news had not kept up with news of its own business. The *Post-Dispatch* advised a more thorough study and asked: "When is it going to get out some recommendations as up-to-date as the news broadcasts on which it hands

[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid.

out advice?"[29]

In spite of the national attention to this issue and the arguments advanced on both sides, surprisingly little follow-up was offered. Once the broadcast of war news subsided-- particularly when reports on war casualties left the airwaves -- the hue and cry over distasteful and inappropriate middle commercials died down, although, from time to time, a divergent view was aired. In one widely reported incident in 1946, newscaster Don Hollenbeck was fired because he began an early morning report following a singing commercial with: "The atrocity you have just heard is not a part of this program."[30]

By 1946, broadcasters were becoming preoccupied with the implications of the FCC's report, Public Service Responsibility of Broadcast Licensees, more commonly known as "The Blue Book." The document castigated American radio for a variety of failures, targeting commercial excess and specifically mentioning the middle commercial. It quoted a segment from the New York *Times*.

> The virtual subordination of radio's standards to the philosophy of advertising inevitably has led the networks into an unhealthy and untenable position. It has permitted Gabriel Heatter to shift without emphasis from a discussion of the war to the merits of hair tonic.[31]

In spite of warnings of "The Blue Book," middle commercials played much less a role in the abbreviated radio newscasts of post-World War II America. Of course, crisis reporting and coverage of war news have raised similar concerns since that time and some additional changes have taken place. Newscaster endorsement of products has been eliminated from the airwaves, newscasts have become segmented, and single-product sponsorship of newscasts has become virtually extinct, thus lessening the likelihood of commercial influence. The introduction of personal hygiene and contraceptive ads on television has created a stir, and some excesses in children's advertising have caused denunciations; but efforts by the NAB and adherence to the NAB Code, plus efforts by consumer groups to monitor potentially offensive advertising, have decreased the chance of another campaign against middle commercials.

Unlike the brief press-radio war preceding it, the "plug-ugly" campaign was, by and large, a highly selective attempt by the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* to apply newspaper standards to a still rela-

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[29] "News Committee Misses the News," St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*, October 9, 1945, 2C.

[30] Fang, *Those Radio Commentators!* , 12.

[31] Quoted in Charles A. Siepmann, "Storm in the Radio World," *The American Mercury* 63 (August 1946), 201-207. See also Richard J. Meyer, "The Blue Book," *Journal of Broadcasting* 6 (1962), 203.

tively young broadcast industry. It undoubtedly affected the trend away from having newscasters read advertising copy but had little long-term effect on the placement of ads. In spite of the limited impact of the campaign, Joseph Pulitzer II continued to monitor ads placed on KSD Radio. He took a personal interest in this area and had staff members keep him informed on occasions when the station deviated from established standards.[32] Of course, television would soon begin to catch on nationally and radio broadcasters would have less of a chance to pick and choose potential sponsors. In the aftermath, except in time of national crisis, the American public has come to accept and even expect commercial interruption as an integral part of the major newscasts of the day.

In the context of the evolution of broadcast news -- from a loss leader to a significant money-maker--the campaign against middle commercials stands out as something of a last-ditch effort to curtail commercialism. It is ironic that the effort evolved against the backdrop of what is now regarded as a golden age of radio news, relatively devoid of commercialization by contemporary standards. In the aftermath of the campaign, the author of most of the *Post-Dispatch* "plug-ugly" editorials admitted that it was probably wrong for a newspaper to demand that radio adhere to the standards of print journalism because of the differences in the manner in which information is presented.

[32] See, for example, Joseph Pulitzer II, memo to George M. Burbach, May 15, 1946, Pulitzer Papers, University of Missouri, Western Historical Manuscripts Collection, St. Louis, Missouri.

Historiographical Essay

Journalism Historians and Religion

By Marvin Olasky*

As journalism historians, we like to believe that there has been substantial progress in our field during the twentieth century. In some sub-disciplines progress is evident, but in at least one area of investigation, the relation of journalism to religious belief, journalism history writing until recent years went steadily downhill. Virtually every major new synthesis in the twentieth century -- Payne to Bleyer, Mott to Emery -- presented less information and more obfuscation in this area than its predecessor.

This historiographical essay will trace the decline, point to opportunities for renewal, and suggest new research paths. The essay stands on three assumptions. The first is that statements and actions of historical characters -- such as early American journalists -- should be taken seriously on their own terms. For example, when Benjamin Harris' first stated purpose in publishing *Publick Occurrences* was that "Memorable Occurrents of Divine Providence may not be neglected or forgotten, as they too often are,"[1] we need to understand what he and his contemporaries meant by that theological term, "Providence." When one of the Boston *News-Letter's* chief goals was to help readers know "how to order their prayers and praises to the Great God,"[2] we should not cynically dismiss such wording as a cover for sheer money-making.

The second assumption is that there is a religious component to all interpretive journalism. Any story that does beyond "who/what/when/where/how" into "why" stirs up questions of meaning and causality. Those questions are essentially religious (or "world view," if we are scrupulous about restricting the term religion to beliefs pertaining to a deity). Therefore, historians need to examine how pre-

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[1] *Publick Occurrences, Both Foreign and Domestick*, September 25, 1690.

[2] Boston *News-Letter*, January 21, 1723.

suppositions have influenced action not only in earlier times, but in our own century as well. E.W. Scripps wrote that "I do not believe in God, or any being equal to or similar to the Christian's God." Lincoln Steffens wrote on the last page of his autobiography, "I have been contending, with all my kind, always against God." We should not shrug off such comments as merely rhetorical. We should ask how such answers to deeper "why" questions influenced journalistic treatment of the everyday "why." A history that refuses to examine such issues lacks a basic seriousness.

The third assumption is a call for simple historical accuracy. In discussing the major influence of "religion" on at least early American journalism, it is inaccurate to speak of religion in general, or even a vague Judeo-Christian ethic. The dominant religion was Protestant Christianity as explained by Reformation leaders including John Calvin and John Knox. Their essential message was that "God saves sinners." They argued with great precision that God is sovereign over everything. They stated with great sadness that every person, without exception, is prone to do evil. They explained with great fervor that man's only hope lay in fundamental personal change that could be accomplished only through God's merciful redemption. Christians were those who personally accepted Christ, not members of a particular cultural or ethnic group.

Emphasizing the historical role of Reformed Protestantism is not an attack on other religions. Historical facts are facts, and to understand the roots of American journalism we need to learn how a distinctively Reformed world view led to a theocentric journalism emphasizing personal change among sinful individuals.[3]

Nineteenth-Century Nationalist and Developmental Interpretations

The tendency among journalism historians to stand apart from America's Christian heritage began early. American journalism's first two major historians, Isaiah Thomas and Frederic Hudson, were not Christian believers. Nevertheless, they paid attention to a historical record that in those days was too recent to forget.

Thomas, author in 1810 of the massive *History of Printing in America,* worshipped liberty and economic progress. A Nationalist historian, he saw America as the leading manifestation of both. He showed his commitment through courageous action as a leading Patriot printer and editor during the American Revolution. He never showed much interest in the Bible; he had been apprenticed to a printer who cared little about Christianity and knew less. Thomas may have also been un-

[3] Christian concepts of man's sinfulness, for example, led to an early journalistic emphasis on the individual rather than on social structures of governmental solutions.

derstandably hostile to Puritanism because his great-grandfather was hanged as a witch. Bored with catechisms, Thomas was in a rush to go on to things more exciting, in his case deism and an Enlightenment sense of having progressed "beyond" the Bible.[4]

Yet Thomas' bias did not keep him from conscientiously recording specific detail concerning the religious connections of early printer/journalists. His listing of what was printed is valuable in itself. Titles such as "Speedy Repentance Urged," a news report/sermon about a murderer, "With certain Memorable Providences relating to some other murders," show practical applications of a Christian world view.[5] But Thomas went beyond the bare essentials to comment about the religious underpinnings of journalistic pioneers such as Samuel Kneeland, Richard Draper, and others. He sympathetically portrayed men such as Bartholomew Green, first printer and second owner of the Boston *News-Letter*, as "a very humble and exemplary Christian" with a "tender sympathy to the poor and afflicted."[6]

Thomas' history was standard for many decades. At mid-century Joseph T. Buckingham and James Parton wrote of some journalists,[7] but the second general history, Frederic Hudson's developmental *Journalism in the United States from 1690 to 1872* (1873), did not emerge until the Gilded Age was putting on its finery. Hudson, as managing editor of James Gordon Bennett's New York *Herald*, also had personal experience that undoubtedly affected his history writing: the *Herald* had been attacked by clergymen, especially during the "moral war" of 1839-40. Understandably, Hudson tended to write his own irritation into the past, and he sometimes portrayed the colonial press not as a product of Reformation thought but as a graduate of combat with Christianity. For example, in discussing the *New-England Courant* he wrote of "efforts made to crush the paper and editor in the interest of religion."[8]

While interested mainly in the development of journalism, Hudson's book was like Thomas' in that concern for accurate detail and recording of crucial documents often seemed to overcome bias. For example, Hudson reprinted the entire first (and only) issue of *Publick Occurrences*, allowing attentive readers to see the way editor Benjamin Har-

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[4] Isaiah Thomas, *The History of Printing in America, with a Biography of Printers and an Account of Newspapers*, 2nd ed. (Albany, N.Y., 1874), vol. 1, xxiv. Masters were supposed to instruct their apprentices in matters theological as well as occupational, and Thomas reports that his master gave him "a weekly lesson . . .by rote merely." The master asked "the question from the catechism 'What are the decrees of God;' I answered I could not tell, and then, boy-like, asked him what they were. He read the answer from the book. I was of the opinion he knew as little about the matter as myself."

[5] Ibid., vol. II, 332.

[6] Quoted from the Boston *News-Letter*, January 4, 1733.

[7] Neither Buckingham (*Specimens of Newspaper Literature: With Personal Memoirs, Anecdotes, and Reminiscences*, [1850]), nor Parton (*The Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin* [1864]) provided any systematic examination.

[8] Frederick Hudson, *Journalism in the United States from 1690 to 1872* (New York, 1873), 71.

ris' stress on God's sovereignty affected his coverage of news items. Harris wrote that God supplied the harvest, that God aided firefighters, that "God alone will have all the glory."[9] Hudson reprinted Andrew Hamilton's masterful speech at the 1735 Zenger trial, allowing readers to see the biblical basis of the Zenger defense: that since bad leaders are criticized in the Bible, such criticism is proper.[10] Hudson also reprinted an autobiographical sketch of nineteenth-century Christian editor Nathaniel Willis and briefly gave the history of some of New York's mid-nineteenth-century Christian newspapers.

The third general history written in the nineteenth century, S.N.D. North's *History and Present Conditions of the Newspaper and Periodical Press of the United States* (1884), was far below those by Thomas and Hudson in that it had a purely materialistic emphasis. The first two historians both spotlighted the role of individual editors and their choices, but North -- who had been commissioned by the U.S. Census Bureau to study newspapers for the 1880 census -- saw the growth of newspapers almost purely in terms of industrialization and new technology. With statistical tables replacing discussion of ideas at North's inn, there was no room for analysis of religion's impact.

Early Twentieth-Century Works

The first general history of journalism published in the twentieth century, James Melvin Lee's *History of American Journalism* (1917), also reflected a developmental emphasis that ignored theological considerations. It was methodologically similar to Thomas' century-old work in its tracing of printing's progress colony-by-colony (and territory-by-territory, and state-by-state, and so on, and so on). However, it lacked the patriot printer's fervor and pride. Lee believed that "neutral" reporting was the highest journalistic calling. He was unable to appreciate journalists of an earlier age who saw world view as vital. For example, Lee labeled the early nineteenth century -- a time of great ideological debate in the press, with Christian-based publications dominant and editorial passion evident -- as "the darkest period in the history of American journalism."[11]

George Henry Payne's Progressive *History of Journalism in the*

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[9] Ibid., 24-27.

[10] Ibid., 89: "If a libel is understood in the large and unlimited sense urged by Mr. Attorney," Hamilton argued following remarks of the prosecutor, "Moses, meek as he was, libelled Cain. . . . Were some persons to go through the streets of New York now-a-days, and read a part of the Bible, if it was not known to be such, Mr. Attorney, with the help of his innuendos, would easily turn it into a libel. As for instance, the sixteenth verse of the ninth chapter of Isaiah: The leaders of the people caused them to err and they that are led by them are destroyed." Hamilton, in his citing of biblical passages concerning corrupt leaders, blind watchmen, and "greedy dogs that can never have enough," essentially argued that Zenger merely had followed the biblical model.

[11] James Melvin Lee, *History of American Journalism* (Garden City, N.Y., 1917), 143.

United States, published only three years after Lee's, showed appreciation of the courage of some early Christian journalists. For example, Payne quoted Benjamin Harris' declaration on being sentenced to prison in England for publishing a work openly critical of the King -- "I hope that God will give me patience to go through with it" -- and wrote that, "There is something of the best of American journalism in that simple declaration."[12] Yet, while Payne praised "the democratic tendency that came with Christianity,"[13] he was conventional in his criticism of Puritanism and viewed religion as a vestigial organ of the body politic.

The next author of a general journalism history, Willard Bleyer, wanted that organ surgically removed. In his *Main Currents in the History of American Journalism* (1927), Bleyer equated "Church" with "restrictions on freedom of discussion"[14] and ignored differences among church traditions. Essentially a Developmental historian, Bleyer had the elitist belief that the "unthinking" masses were ruled by emotion and primitive faith. The goal of journalists, as members of the enlightened class, was to point the way to democratic reform. Bleyer wanted to make sure that journalism developed along responsible lines. In the 1930s he argued for professional licensing of journalists and for legal requirements that newspapers be run in what he defined as the public interest.[15]

Some popular critics and Progressive historians of the 1920s and 1930s also fostered hostility to the idea that independent journalism grew out of Reformation thought. Oswald Garrison Villard, in *Some Newspapers and Newspaper-Men* (1923), attacked Christian belief and twisted Bible passages to promote an early version of liberation theology. He wrote that "There are plain masses seeking a journalistic Moses to clarify their minds, to give them a program of reconstruction, a moral issue through which to rebuild a brokendown society.[16] George Seldes similarly examined recent newspaper history and saw press, church, and "big business" embracing each other adulterously.[17]

Both academic and popular Progressive historians more and more seemed to consider Christianity a conservative ally of the upper class and therefore a reactionary foe of the masses' drive for equality. A new publication during the inter-war period, *Journalism Quarterly,* showed

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[12] George Henry Payne, *History of Journalism in the United States* (New York, 1920), 21. Payne also described Harris reading the Bible while on the ship taking him to Boston. Payne himself showed a liberal deism in writing of how "humanity could be led to reverence the Deity through the simple processes of Eternal Law, unfolding and unraveling man's liberty, equality and happiness" (11).

[13] Ibid., 2.

[14] Bleyer, 2.

[15] See Bleyer, "Journalism in the United States: 1933," *Journalism Quarterly* 10 (1933), 296-301, and "Freedom of the Press and the New Deal," *Journalism Quarterly* 11 (1943), 22-35.

[16] Villard, 314.

[17] See George Seldes, *Lords of the Press* (New York, 1945).

some of the same tendencies and (probably reflecting the lack of interest among journalism professors) ignored Reformation origins. However, one article did go on at great length about an early deistic editor.[18]

Mid-Century Developmental Influences

Frank Luther Mott, the leading journalism historian from the 1940s through the 1960s, expressed scorn for George Seldes' opinionated historiocity. He wrote of one Seldes book that "the way to read our author is to forget about facts and concentrate on the gyrations of flashing mind and a violent set of emotions."[19] Mott showed in his large, general text *American Journalism* (1941),[20] that he never met a fact about journalism history he didn't like -- and therefore, the Christian heritage did receive some mention. He noted that from 1801 to 1833 " a phenomenon of the times was the 'religious newspaper,' a weekly journal which printed some secular news [and] often competed successfully with the secular papers.... Many of these papers were conducted with great vigor and ability."[21]

Mott, however, refused to see religious influences in any way significant for the larger development of journalism; he thus left many important stories incomplete. He wrote, for example, that in the *Courant* inoculation debate Episcopalians were lining up on one side and Calvinists such as the Mathers on the other -- but Mott did not see, or did not explain, how journalistic visions grew out of theological distinctives. He did not explain the role of religion in either the Harris or Zenger episodes. In comparing Virginia Governor William Berkeley's famous ban on learning and publishing with the emphasis on schooling and printing in New England, he did not even mention the difference between Calvinist and Anglican ideas of individual and state. He described Kentucky editor Cassius Clay as a "picturesque character," which he was, but did not even touch on the religious beliefs that underlay Clay's courage. He mentioned that the New York *Journal of Commerce* was founded as "a commercial paper with strong religious bias" and the New York *Times* as a newspaper designed to "take a higher moral tone," but in neither case did he discuss the influ-

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[18] Chester E. Jorgenson, "A Brand Flung at Colonial Orthodoxy," *Journalism Quarterly* 12 (1935), 272-277, praised colonial printer Samuel Keimer: In Keimer's deism "superstition has given place to science," and "Calvin's wrathful and petulant God" was no more. Jorgenson applauded Keimer for "extolling reasonableness rather than saintliness, nature rather than have scripture, humanitarian service rather than the spiritual ascent of the individual . . . ." (In this Jorgenson differed from Benjamin Franklin, quoted in Thomas, I, 233; Franklin sympathized with Keimer's expressed theology but observed that Keimer "was a great knave at heart, that he possessed no particular religion, but a little of all upon occasion.")

[19] Review of *The Facts Are* in *Journalism Quarterly*, 20 (1943), 335-336.

[20] Mott's five-volume history of American magazines is also worth analysis, but in the interests of space is passed by in this essay.

[21] Mott, *American Journalism*, 206.

ence of a Christian world view on those great beginnings.[22]

In short, Mott deserves credit for his perseverance in scholarship, but his developmental perspective led him to believe that as newspapers became more "professional" they would leave world views behind. Thus, his discussion of more recent decades ignored religion entirely, except to note the existence of some ghettoized churchly publications. The tendency was still to equate the dominant American religious heritage with suppression of thought and opposition to press freedom.

Progressive/Developmental Synthesis

Following Mott's death in 1964, a new, simpler textbook, Edwin Emery's *The Press and America*, now in its sixth edition, was able to sweep the field.[23] *The Press and America* was accepted not only for its ease of presentation, but because its liberal materialism and emphasis on class struggle fit perfectly with academic orthodoxy of recent decades. Power, the book informed students, is "grasped by one class at the expense of another." Politics is a battle of "the rights of property versus the rights of the individual." The American Revolution began because journalists and others saw "the need for a realignment of class power." In one astounding paragraph about the Revolution, *The Press and America* five times brought in "class struggle...class conflict... class struggle...class leaders...a class insisting upon a greater share of control." This struggle continued into the early twentieth century, when "crusaders for social justice" fought against "unrestricted economic individualism."[24]

The book's historical materialism included a treatment of religion as superstructure and material as base. *The Press and America* termed Puritan theology "religious double talk" and equated it with the antebellum slavery debate as "the basket in which all differences of peoples, regions, and ideologies could be carried."[25] The few mentions of religion showed the authors accepting stereotypes that historians who took theology seriously long had discredited. For example, *The Press and America* equated Calvinism with a gospel of prosperity in which money is the sign of "having passed through the eye of the needle into the circle of the elect."[26] In reality, Calvinists frequently warned about the snares of wealth. "Riches are no part of your felicity," Richard Baxter wrote; "riches are nothing but plentiful provision for tempting

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[22] Ibid., 263, 181, 280.

[23] Henry Ladd Smith was co-author of the first edition published in 1954; Michael Emery is now co-author.

[24] Emery and Emery, 13, 106, 58, 47, 245.

[25] Ibid., 146.

[26] Ibid., 20.

corruptible flesh."[27]

The Press and America, influential simply because it was so widely used as a textbook, was one of many works that emphasized the relation of media and society. Some tried for breadth. Sidney Kobre, a prolific historian of the Cultural school, viewed press development from what he called a "sociological" perspective intended to take into account economic, political, technological, sociological, geographic, and cultural forces. In practice, though, religion received only minor attention in his books, and the attention it received was as negative as that in Emery. For example, he wrote of the problems faced by those "who dared defy the wrath of the Puritan clergy and the royal governor," as if those were one force.[28] Kobre did write two favorable articles on the remarkable Jewish editor of the early nineteenth century, Mordecai Noah.[29]

The few *Journalism Quarterly* articles that touched on religious/historical aspects during the 1950s and 1960s often mixed progressivism with theological know-nothingism. This approach probably reflected the general ignorance or antipathy toward Christianity among many professional historians.[30] For example, Howard H. Fogel in 1960 was amazed that Cotton Mather campaigned for a colonial charter following the downfall of royal governor Sir Edmund Andros: "His agreement and acceptance of the Charter and his subsequent fighting for it seems remarkable considering how limited the role of the clergy in the government's affairs would be." That was not at all remarkable, since the Reformation political theory required a limited role for the clergy in government, but Fogel was echoing the prejudice that a free press must have emerged in a battle against "theocracy."[31]

The Centrality of Christianity to Early Journalism

During the past twenty years, historians have begun to look more closely at the relation of religion and journalism. Part of the increased interest may simply be the result of the expansion of journalism history-writing generally, and the search for previously-ignored topics. Part may represent a new yearning for cultural roots. Part may come

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[27]Richard Baxter, *Chapters from A Christian Directory,* ed. Jeannette Tawney (London, 1925), 50.

[28]Sidney Kobre, *Development of American Journalism* (Dubuque, 1969), 3; see also 5, 6, 24, 154.

[29]See Sidney Kobre, "The Editor Who Freed Hostages," *Media History Digest* 1 (1981) 55-57, 60. Noah may have been of particular interest to Kobre, who is Jewish. My own background is also Jewish, and I heard about Mordecai Noah at a very early age. At that time I was antagonistic to writers who saw a Christian belief as central to the development of American institutions.

[30]My co-authored book, *Turning Point,* with Herbert Schlossberg (Westchester, Ill., 1987), notes some recent examples of academic bias.

[31]Howard H. Fogel, "Colonial Theocracy and a Secular Press," *Journalism Quarterly* 37 (1960), 525-532. Fogel wrote that "A theocracy, by definition closed and narrow, does not favor an inquisitive mind" (527) -- but doesn't that depend on the type of theocracy, and on whether it is clericocratic or bibliocratic?

from a personal search for meaning. In any case, useful work concerning denominational publications and coverage of church news has emerged.[32]

These several dozen points of light are very welcome, but they still tend to examine what could be called *marginalized religion.* It is good to have information about publications *of* and *about* various groups, but we are still without a solid history of the way that world views have always been *central* to American journalism, affecting coverage of everything from abortion and crime to governmental programs and economic news.

Some excellent work concerning early journalism has perceived that centrality. C. Edward Wilson's article on the Boston inoculation controversy of 1721-22 overcame generations of journalism history books to finally tell the story right. Instead of following the crowd and portraying the affair as the first triumph of journalistic freedom against the government-theocratic alliance, Wilson showed that the *Courant* was actually allied *with* the town government against the innovative position of Cotton Mather.[33] The journal *Journalism History* also came through with a "Special Issue on Sensationalism" that included back-to-back articles relating Christian views to news coverage in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and late nineteenth centuries.[34]

Similarly, David Nord placed Andrew Hamilton's defense of John Zenger in an accurate theological framework. Nord pointed out that "the Zenger case was a disputation on *truth*, and on how truth is revealed to man. In Nord's words, "Hamilton did not -- he could not-- ask the jury to decide the nature and extent of individualism and free thought. He asked them instead to decide the question, 'What is truth?' In our age of relativism and skepticism, this would seem to be the more troubling question. But in 1735, the jury was prepared to take it on. Nord also suggested other far-reaching differences between journalists of then and now. Noting that the New York *Journal* prominently featured "Cato's Letters," written by John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon, Nord pointed out that "To an extent not often appreciated, Cato's understanding of truth was rooted in religion. All human authority and power were divinely limited, in Cato's view. 'Power without control appertains to God alone, and no man ought to be trusted with what no man is equal to.'" Finally, Nord alluded to the foolishness of trying to view colonial newspapers as somehow removed from religion: "Though

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[32] These works are cited in Wm. David Sloan, *American Journalism History: An Annotated Bibliography* (Westport, Conn., 1989).

[33] C. Edward Wilson, "The Boston Inoculation Controversy: A Revisionist Interpretation," *Journalism History* 7 (1980), 16-19, 40.

[34] Mitchell Stephens, "Sensationalism and Moralizing in 16th and 17th-Century Newsbooks and News Ballads," and Marvin Olasky, "Late 19th-Century Texas Sensationalism: Hypocrisy or Biblical Morality?" *Journalism History* 12 (1985), 92-95, 96-100.

the New York *Weekly Journal* was essentially a political newspaper, it professed a politics with deep religious roots. The easy interplay between politics and religion in the pages of the *Journal* suggests that for many New Yorkers the two were actually one."[35] Nord also has argued that America's mass media had evangelical origins. "A missionary impulse . . .," he wrote, "lay at the foundation of the popularization of print in the 19th century."[36] In a paper delivered at the 1988 AEJMC convention, Nord decisively broke from an almost century-long journalism history tradition of disparaging the Puritans as book-bound narrowers of life. Instead, he praised their nose for news: Puritans were "obsessed with events, with the news. They could see all around them the providence of God." Instead of disparaging the Mathers, Nord emphasized their event-oriented sermons and noted that "Increase Mather's publication record in the last quarter of the seventeenth century represents the first major flowering [of] indigenous American journalism." Nord even noted that Increase Mather's reporting of both material and spiritual phenomena "is empirical in its way. The empirical data are the statements of the sources. Mather's method is the empiricism of the news reporter, not the scientist."[37]

To understand more about the people behind early American journalism, historians should examine Leland Ryken's *Worldly Saints: The Puritans as They Really Were* (1986). Ryken showed that Puritans liked sex, laughter, sports, brains, and good writing. Harry Stout's *The New England Soul* (1986) also provides a positive reevaluation that should be of wide interest to journalism historians. Both Ryken and Stout are to some extent following the path blazed by the brilliant Perry Miller a generation ago, but their depictions of the Puritans as human beings rather than walking treatises are probably more accessible to general readers.

The decade-old work of Elizabeth Eisenstein will also be vital in any reexamination of the roots of American journalism.[38] Her careful scholarship shows the relation of the Protestant Reformation to the early development of printing and bookselling, with Protestants told by their leaders to read in order to avoid superstition, and Catholics commanded to avoid heresy by not reading. The difference in literacy, combined with the Reformation desire to apply the Bible to every area of life, formed the cultural basis for the development of newsbooks,

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[35] David Nord, "The Authority of Truth: Religion and the John Peter Zenger Case," *Journalism Quarterly* 62 (1985), 227-235.

[36] David Paul Nord, "The Evangelical Origins of Mass Media in America, 1815-1835," Journalism Monographs 88 (1984), 2.

[37] David Nord, "Teleology and News: The Religious Roots *of American* Journalism, 1630-1730," presented to the History Division, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Portland, Ore. July 1988.

[38] Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press As an Agent of Change* (New York, 1979). See especially chapter 4, "The Spiritual Recast: Setting the Stage for the Reformation."

broadside ballads, and -- eventually -- newspapers. Eisenstein's work helps to explain why American journalism got its start in the area of the country most deeply rooted in the Reformation tradition, New England. That was where literacy was most widespread and ideas of press freedom had the greatest opportunity to win slow acceptance.

This recent scholarship undermines the conventional tendency of journalism historians to start the story of independent journalism with the supposed rebellion of the *Courant* against the powers of Boston; the legend then continues with other journalists who fought against Reformation theology. In actuality, though, if the real starting point of American journalism is the Protestant Reformation, with the *Courant* episode forming just one sophomoric blip on the chart, then the real story of American journalistic courage lies in the attempt of printers, encouraged by the Reformation perspective, to become independent truth-tellers within a biblical framework. I am currently writing on these questions.

The Recent Dominance of Non-Christian World Views

Needing far more discussion is the question of religion's role in American journalism once biblical Christianity, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, lost its dominant position in American life.[39] I have discussed this in a number of convention papers and articles, and in two books published in 1988, *Prodigal Press: The Anti-Christian Bias of the American News Media* and *The Press and Abortion, 1838-1988.* Historians a century from now may well be examining the way a world promising freedom from religion but demanding particular rituals of its own took over twentieth-century American journalism.

Some books by scholars outside of journalism history suggest methods of approach. For example, James Billington, who now heads the Library of Congress, has described the mixture of revolution, journalism, and world view that turned Europe upside down from the time of the French Revolution through the advent of Lenin's Soviet dictatorship. As Billington noted, "In revolutionary France journalism rapidly arrogated to itself the Church's former role as the propagator of values, models, and symbols for society at large."[40] The pattern continued into the nineteenth century, as "journalism was the most important single professional activity for revolutionary Saint-Simonians and

[39] The tradition still had an effect on journalists. See, in this issue, Bruce Evensen, "The Evangelical Origins of the Muckrakers," *American Journalism* (1989), 5-30.

[40] James Billington, *Fire in the Minds of Men* (New York, 1986), 33: "Indeed, the emergence of dedicated, ideological revolutionaries in a traditional society (in Russia of the 1860s no less than in France of the 1790s) depended heavily on literate priests and seminarians becoming revolutionary journalists .... Journalism was the only income-producing profession practiced by Marx, Lenin, and many other leading revolutionaries during their long years of powerlessness and exile."

Hegelians."[41]

For many years America was spared what Billington called "the new breed of intellectual journalist" filled with revolutionary faith, but American journalistic exceptionalism began disappearing early in this century when Lincoln Steffens, Charles Edward Russell, and others became influential. I have written about Lincoln Steffens' definition of sin in 1931 -- "Treason to Communism" -- and the sad ending to his search for faith.[42] To my knowledge, however, the number of current journalism historians examining and criticizing the influence of Marxist belief in American journalism may be numbered on the famous hand of oldtime baseball player Three Finger Mordecai Brown. As the academy strikes out, some of the best critical analysis of journalistic practice is coming out of independent groups such as the Media Research Center in Washington.

A New Paradigm

What is to be done? For many years journalism scholars have been calling for new historical interpretations. Among them, James Carey in the early 1970s called for a "cultural history" and noted that "journalism is essentially a state of consciousness, a way of apprehending, of experiencing the world."[43] In the late 1970s Joseph McKerns proposed that journalism historians "turn to a study of the dominant ideas in society, and to the journalistic purveyors and conveyors of those ideas, within the *context* of the times."[44]

With all these good intentions, however, no book-length work integrating journalism history and religious trends has been published. Two new survey history books published in 1988 -- Mitchell Stephens' *A History of News* and the Jean Folkerts/Dwight Teeter text *Voices of a Nation* -- are improvements in many respects on *The Press and America*, but they hold to the conventional pattern of minimizing the influence of religion. Joseph McKerns a decade ago accurately described *The Press and America* as "the most complete statement of journalism history as Progressive history, and it leaves very little to be said that is 'new' within the Progressive paradigm."[45] To my mind, that statement still holds.

The problem may be that the Developmental and Progressive schools, even when shorn of some of their specific elements, still have a hold on most journalism historians and both schools have, with rare

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[41] P. 308.

[42] Marvin Olasky, "Steffens Wanted to Know 'Why,'" Houston *Post*, August 9, 1986, 35.

[43] James Carey, "The Problem of Journalism History," *Journalism History* 1 (1974), 3-5, 27.

[44] Joseph P. McKerns, "The Limits of Progressive Journalism History," *Journalism History* 4 (1977), 91.

[45] Ibid.

exceptions, tended to equate biblical Christianity with the beast from twenty thousand fathoms. To develop a more accurate view of journalism history, we need to depart completely from the developmental and progressive paradigms. For example, journalism historians should examine the work of Nathaniel Willis, William Leggett, and other early-nineteenth-century journalists who emphasized a combination of spiritual, political, and economic freedom. If we see this earlier period of American journalism not as something to rise above but as a principled era that has much to teach us, a different perspective on Greeley, Pulitzer, and other nineteenth century "great men" will emerge. Radically different appraisals of journalists often held up as twentieth century heroes -- Scripps and Duranty, Graham and Woodward -- will arise.

Journalism historians who are Christians -- by which is meant not family background but a personal belief in Christ as Lord and Savior -- may be most inclined to accept the attacks that come with breaking new ground in this way. But some historians without that faith have the desire to dig out all the facts and then tell the whole story, come what may. Their honesty deserves great support. The battle to develop an accurate history is for everyone for, if we do not recognize the importance of the role of Christianity, we will be unable to look at the whole story of journalism's past without trying to sweep much of it under rugs far too small.

Journalism historians are not alone in having dropped down the memory hole the integral place of Christianity in American history. A recent National Institute of Education study of sixty representative precollege social studies textbooks found Christianity virtually excluded. In books for grades one through four that introduced children to an understanding of American society, researcher Paul Vitz and his associates found not a single word about Christianity. Fifth-grade history texts made it appear that religious life ceased to exist in America about a century ago. Fundamentalists were described as people who followed an ancient agricultural way of life. Pilgrims were defined as "people who took long trips."[47] Some writings in journalism history are more sophisticated but not different in kind. Should we laugh? Should we cry? No, we should get to work.

[47] Paul Vitz, *Religion and Traditional Values in Public School Textbooks* (Washington, D.C., 1986).

BOOK REVIEWS

Shore, Elliot. *Talkin' Socialism, J.A. Wayland and the Role of the Press in American Radicalism, 1890-1912*. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1988. 280 pp. Cloth, $25.

J.A. Wayland promoted his cause and made a handsome living -- by "talkin' socialism" in a weekly newspaper published in the small town of Girard, Kansas, during the movement's American heyday. Wayland's *Appeal to Reason*, Elliot Shore points out in this intriguing study, "was the only mass-circulation radical publication in the history of the United States." Moreover, says Shore, after the demise of this widely-read newspaper no other radical American publication would have control of state-of-the-art communication facilities such as the *Appeal* boasted in its day.

Wayland's paper, ensconced in its own publishing plant, had a half-million readers when he went home on November 10, 1912, and put a bullet through his head. The reason for his act remains unclear. His death occurred just days after the Socialist party's presidential candidate, Eugene V. Debs, polled a million votes -- the largest yet for the Socialist party. But Shore, noting that Debs ran a distant fourth behind Wilson, Teddy Roosevelt, and Taft, says that the election "show[ed] conclusively that the Socialist party would neither replace the Democrats nor become a third party of strength." Indeed, Wayland left a note which said: "The struggle under the competitive system is not worth the effort; let it pass." However, there were other possible reasons for his suicide, chief among them his despondency over his wife's death in an accident. The newspaper would survive Wayland, flourish for two more years, and then begin a steady -- eventually fatal -- decline.

Shore writes that his central purpose in this study is to examine the key newspapers of the socialist movement during a period of development of mass culture "to understand better the nature of the appeal that socialism made to a mass audience." Although he touches on other socialist publications and journalists, it is the *Appeal to Reason* and the contradictory figure of its founder on which he concentrates.

The socialism of Wayland, like that of Debs, grew from American roots and was idealistic but often intolerant. Irving Howe in his 1985 *Socialism in America* characterizes the *Appeal* as expressing "both an unspoiled idealism and the naivete' of a poorly digested Marxism. Bubbling with ingenuous enthusiasm, it spoke in rich homespun accents.

It was remarkable, also, for its air of certainty, its lack of reflectiveness."

Shore's more detailed depiction of the *Appeal* and its guiding spirit is not in conflict with Howe's assessment. He takes note of the contributions that the *Appeal* and the Socialist party made in presenting "the possibilities for radical change in the United States" and in "forc[ing] the pace of most Progressive reforms in the first two decades of the twentieth century." But he also dwells on Wayland's personal contradictions, his practice of living in "separate spheres."

While propagandizing for socialism, Wayland printed profitable advertising for quack cures and get-rich-quick schemes. He was, besides, an indefatigable speculator in real estate. Shore puts Wayland's rationalizations into words: "Why not make the most of the existing system, even as you work to overthrow it? One's personal economic life, then, can be kept separate from one's political vision." Shore says Wayland thus "throws into question the entire socialist program, by removing his own economic life from that of the whole."

Talkin' Socialism is a well researched and perceptive addition to the histories of both American socialism and journalism. It adds a new dimension to historical scholarship on a period when the star of American socialism seemed to be rising.

John E. Byrne
The National Archives

George H. Douglas. *The Early Days of Radio Broadcasting.* Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co. 1987. 248 pp.

The 1920s fascinate the broadcast historian, and this book focuses its attention on that period in an informal account that is dotted with anecdotes. The book is easily read and can add some interesting stories to enliven lectures on journalism history.

"The truth is, it has never been easy to decide when radio broadcasting really began," Douglas writes. Then he begins Chapter 1 with the KDKA story. Chapter 2, "The Radio Rage," describes the rapid growth of the industry and concludes with the WEAF toll broadcast experiment. "Up from the Crystal Set," next, is a continuation of the technological discussion. Chapter 4, "The Rise of the Radio Announcer," briefly identifies early radio personalities: Tommy Cowan, Milton Cross, Graham MacNamee, Norman Brokenshire, Charles Popenoe, etc. Douglas also notes the presence of several "women announcers [who] did well on women's and children's programs." Unfortunately, there is little discussion of these individuals their contribu-

tions. Chapter 5, "A Million Sets Are Sold," would seem to have been better placed as a continuation of radio's rapid growth (chapter 2). Chapter 6, "The Beckoning Hand of Advertising," discusses differing support theories of taxation and the toll. "To understand the original and somewhat innocent idea of a toll station today one has to understand how the telephone company conceived of radio," Douglas writes. Direct advertising evolved from the toll, and eventually, "advertising had arrived to stay."

"The Wave Length Wars," Chapter 7, is the most disappointing one in the text. In only seven pages, Douglas dismisses this important aspect of radio development. He says nothing of the people or the socio-economic factors affecting these legislative decisions. The anecdotes and information about people included in previous chapters are noticeably missing here.

"The Birth of Radio News" reviews the early public events covered by the new medium and discusses the backgrounds of H.V. Kaltenborn and Lowell Thomas. Moving to sports, in Chapter 9, Douglas declares that "no people in the history of the world...have been more attracted to sporting events...than the people of the U.S." Again, this chapter is a review of people and major events. Chapter 10, entitled "Networks," follows up the question of advertising and industry support, and implies that if there ever was a question as to how radio would be financed, "the network idea gave the answer." In his discussion of "The Educational Broadcast Stations," Chapter 11, Douglas switches from the development of commercial radio to the new educational medium: "Three things are clear about educational radio. It had a glorious beginning. It has always had a struggle for funding.... The alternative of the educational station will continue." Chapters 12 and 13 examine the forms of classical and popular radio music. Chapters 14 and 15 focus on the evolution of entertainment programming from "The Expanding Broadcast Day" to "Amos 'n' Andy." In his conclusion, "Radio Reprise," Douglas broadly summarizes major themes and comments on their effect: "Radio was new and sounds had to be plucked by the cat's whiskers . . . [but] it has in fact conferred more blessings on society than even its most enthusiastic supporters could have hoped."

The text will be disappointing to scholars of broadcast history because it adds little new information beyond interesting anecdotes and is almost universally lacking in documentation. But it is colorful, light, and informative, which is precisely what Douglas intended it to be, and makes fine extracurricular reading.

Donald G. Godfrey
Arizona State University

Benjamin Franklin: Writings. Edited by J.A. Leo Lemay. New York: The Library of America, 1987. 1605 pp. Index. Cloth, $30.

The Library of America's collection of the writings of Benajmin Franklin, one of the greatest journalists of our history, is a worthy addition to the shelves of anyone interested in Franklin or 18th-century America. It is an excellent production that presents a variety of materials in a well-organized manner. Both published pieces and private letters are included and are presented in a chronological arrangement covering the entirety of Franklin's life and career. J.A. Leo Lemay's ability as an editor is well demonstrated, particularly in the carefully produced end notes which identify in great detail quotations used by Franklin and people mentioned in the course of his writings.

This collection of Franklin's work, however, is much more than a well-crafted book. In his choice of pieces to include, Lemay has gathered materials that ably present the many aspects of Franklin: politician, rebel, statesman, diplomat, scientist, political philosopher, and, of course, journalist.

Franklin's interest in local affairs is indicated in the many essays about current issues which he wrote and published during his long public career. Examples of these include the "Silence Dogood" series (5-42) and "The Busy-Body" essays (92-118). Some treatises and letters, such as "What would satisfy the Americans?" (747) and "The sale of the Hessians" (917-919), show us Franklin's ideas about and role in the American Revolution. Franklin's efforts at statesmanship and diplomacy are revealed in several letters to the Comte de Vergennes (1034-1037, 1060-1061). His interest in science is shown many times -- as in "Cause of Experiments" (355-357), "Letter to Jean Chappe D'Auteroche" (831-832), and "Letter to Benjamin Vaughan" (1163-1166). Franklin's views on how one should live and life in general are exhibited through the selections from *Poor Richard's Almanac* and *Autobiography*.

More important for the historian of American journalism, however, are the materials which exhibit and explain Franklin's place in the development of the American press. The materials dealing with Franklin's printing and newspaper career present his ideas about editing, his fellow printers, newspapers, and the profession of printing in general.

As the publisher of both books and newspapers, Franklin served as an editor on many occasions. Letters to Thomas Hopkinson (431-436), Cadwallader Colden (466-468), Oliver Neave (792-794), and the Abbe' Soulave (1056) provide insight into his editorial style. As any good critic should, Franlin tried to make suggestions in a positive manner that would improve the pieces under scrutiny without offending the author.

Franklin had strong opinions concerning the state of printing in Europe and America. He was very conscious of how a printed work looked. He commented on printers who did good work (1040-1041), and he criticized his colleagues for publishing faulty work because of bad types (1012-1013) or poor style (1173-1178). He showed great pride, too, in the quality of the work done at his own Philadelphia shop (1364).

A newspaper, in Franklin's view, was the highest production possible for any printer. Newspapers provided an "important means of communicating Instruction" to the general public (1398). He was proud of his own paper, the Pennsylvania *Gazette*. Franklin thought that a newspaper had to be run properly, and he tried to do that in his own paper. He stated in his Autobiography that, in conducting his newspaper, he "carefully excluded all Libelling and Personal Abuse" in order always to produce a clean newspaper (1398).

Finally, Franklin believed printing was a difficult but rewarding career. He worried about demands that the public made on printers and what they produced. He concluded that "it is unreasonable to imagine Printers approve of every thing they print, and to censure them on any particular thing accordingly; since in the way of their Business they print such great variety of things opposite and contradictory. It is likewise as unreasonable what some assert, That Printers ought not to print any Thing but what they approve; since of all of that Business should make such a Resolution, and abide by it, an End would thereby be put to Free Writing, and the World would afterwards have nothing to read but what happen'd to be the Opinions of the Printers" (173). Furthermore, "if all Printers were determin'd not to print any thing till they were sure if would offend no body, there would be very little printed" (173). But, even with all the problems, Franklin still praised the profession because "by the press we can speak to nations; and good books and well written pamphlets have great and general influence. The facility, with which the same truths may be repeatedly enforced by placing them daily in different lights in newspapers, which are everywhere read, gives a great chance of establishing them" (1049). The impact of printing made it worth all the headaches.

Carol Sue Humphrey
Oklahoma Baptist University

Robert G. Picard. *The Ravens of Odin: The Press in Nordic Nations.* Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1988. 153 pp., $22.95.

The media of Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, and Iceland should be of interest to mass communication scholars for several reasons.

Chief among them is their long tradition of press freedom which has served as a model to Western countries. *The Ravens of Odin* explores this tradition and many other aspects of the Nordic press.

Of special note to historians is the first part of the book, which includes a brief overview of the 300-year history of the Nordic press. This section piques one's interest in the subject which ususally has had only perfunctory mention in standard journalism histories. Given the brevity of this section, historians will inevitably long for something more substantial. In fairness, however, it should be understood that the historical section is, after all, part of a book whose focus is broad.

As such, *The Ravens of Odin* makes several contributions. It describes, concisely and lucidly, the nature of the Nordic press, paying special attention to its standards of freedom and accountability and the social, economic, political, and cultural milieu in which each nation's press functions. The book will make it plain to American students who hold up the First Amendment as a model of press freedom that they need to consider, as well, the Nordic countries. As Picard writes,

> Social observers in the Nordic region do not view freedom of the press as merely the absence of...restaints but also the presence of conditions that provide the effective ability of citizens to take part in the communication process, i.e., freedom of expression in the mass media is based on two interrelated criteria: that citizens shall be enabled, without unreasonable financial sacrifice, to spread information and express their views; and that all citizens shall be able to choose between messages with different political biases. Therefore, the structure of the mass media shall make provisions for a many-sided approach to all situations.

Picard also contributes some interesting facts to the literature of press economics. He devotes considerable space to discussing how the Nordic nations have worked to prevent newspaper mortality and to assure a variety of diverse media outlets.

The second part of *The Ravens of Odin* consists of concise, up-to-date descriptions of the press of these northern lands. Included are the large, well-known newspapers, as well as less-known but significant ones. With generous illustrations, this section provides an excellent introduction to the contemporary Nordic press. The value of Picard's extensive travel and research is especially evident in the section, as it is, indeed throughout the book.

Nancy Roberts
University of Minnesota

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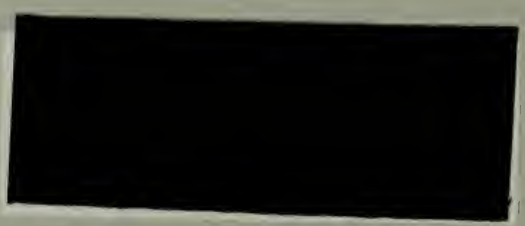

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FROM THE EDITOR

This issue of *American Journalism* contains the historical works deemed the three best submitted to the 1988 paper competition of the American Journalism Historians Association, which sponsors publication of *American Journalism.*

After these three papers had been selected through blind judging, a special board of editors for *American Journalism* examined them. Authors used the editors' comments and suggestions, along with those of the original paper judges, in writing, revised, final versions for publication.

A Last Hurrah for the Frontier Press

By V. Delbert Reed*

The discovery of gold and silver in the Coeur d'Alene region of North Idaho in 1884 brought a rush of prospectors from Nevada, Montana, South Dakota, Colorado, southern Idaho, California, and even the Yukon, where earlier strikes were already mined out or all prime property claimed. These adventurers quickly dotted the deep, twisting canyons and riverbanks with mining camps that soon turned into bustling and often short-lived boom towns.

Closely behind the prospectors were the merchants, saloonkeepers, gamblers, and prostitutes; and not far behind came the frontier printers to report the news of the rich strikes and dance-hall scrapes; describe the beauty and limitless opportunity of their camps; urgently call for railroads to haul away the easily-had wealth and bring in much-needed supplies; and fight the political battle for the growing communities.

Wallace, Idaho, was such a town. Located among the steep mountains near the Idaho-Montana border and eventually boasting such acclaimed mines as the Morning, Sunshine, and Bunker Hill, Wallace quickly became the center of one of the world's richest mining districts, and remains so more than a century later. As it changed from camp to town, Wallace provided one of the last hurrahs for prospectors, gunfighters, gamblers, outlaws, and frontier journalists.

Idaho, like many other western territories in the late 1800s, was in a state of transition from wilderness to settlement, if not civilization, as roads, railroads, and settlers pushed inward from each coast. North Idaho was still robust, young, and untamed, however; and Wallace and surrounding camps were little more than rows of tents along a small wilderness river.

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*Delbert Reed conducted his research while completing graduate studies at the University of Alabama.

The first newspaper in town arrived a full three years after the first gold strikes, and it became much like the town itself. It was at times loud and boisterous; at times boastful and demanding; at other times the voice of reason and reform. As the town's first paper, it helped tame the new territory by bringing news, ideas, and more people from the "civilized" world to the region.

One early Idaho historian recognized the value of the press in the development and civilization of the Coeur d'Alene region. *The History of North Idaho,* published in 1903, said the press was the "key that has unlocked the treasure vaults of northern Idaho and exposed their contents to the world, conveying the information to the people of other states and lands, drawing them hither....No other human agency could have achieved such a triumph as has the press in this civilizing work....By means of the press, the individuals, the communities that make up the country, have been kept in close touch with one another with the natural result–encouragement, new ideas, new life, cooperation...."[1]

Although not an exact replica of any other frontier newspaper, the Wallace *Free Press,* founded in 1887 in the midst of the Coeur d'Alene boom, was not unlike earlier mining-camp newspapers described by other historians. In fact, most of the characteristics of the frontier press listed by historian William Huntzicker[2] were clearly visible in the *Free Press,* its editors, and content at different times between 1887 and 1892.

The *Free Press* had two very different editors during the five years of it existence, yet under each it can be argued that the paper was somewhat typical of the frontier press. Overall, the *Free Press* represented two major models of the frontier press, one more stylish, urbane, and business-oriented, the other more feisty, political, and critical. At the beginning of its five-year life, the newspaper was greatly dependent on economic patronage for success and therefore was a booster press. Later it was at least partly sponsored by a political party, making it a partisan paper. Its pages were consistently filled with the personal journalism typically found in other frontier papers. The editors usually displayed strong political interest and involvement as did most frontier newsmen, and they regularly agitated for such community needs as transportation, schools, mail service, sidewalks, etc. Depending on the editor, the paper also engaged in varying degrees of bombastic editorial combat with other editors in the region.

The*Free Press* was started in much the same manner as some of those newspapers described in *The Chroniclers,*[3] where, due to the great

[1]*History of North Idaho* (Western Publishing Company, 1903), 1205.

[2] William E. Huntzicker, "Historians and the Frontier Press," *American Journalism* V (1988), 36.

[3]*The Chroniclers* Time-Life Books (New York, 1976), 69.

demand for and short supply of newspapers, editors were all but shanghaied to locate in, publicize, and promote new towns. As with the Idaho *Statesman,*[4] the first publishers of the *Free Press* were brought to Wallace by the guarantee of initial success. Colonel W. R. Wallace, the town's founder and major developer, lured the first newspaper to his town on the promise of six months' free office rent and the guarantee of $1,800 in revenue during the same period.[5]

As historians Barbara Cloud[6] and Barron Beshoar[7] found in their studies of the frontier press, a newspaper was vital to a new community because it provided the region with a political voice; acted as a civilizing influence to ensure law and order; provided a means of publishing laws; provided reading matter and news from outside to the growing population, and publicized the potential of the area to the outside world as a means of luring new settlers to the area, much to the benefit of merchants and land developers. Colonel Wallace's main interest in bringing a newspaper to his namesake town apparently was to profit from land sales.

His economic guarantee was sufficient to encourage two brothers, Alfred J. and John L. Dunn, to leave the Portland *Morning Oregonian,* travel to one of the most remote regions of the country, and begin publishing a newspaper of their own for the first time on July 2, 1887.[8] The Dunns, ages twenty-five and twenty-seven at the time, came to the frontier from one of the largest cities in the Pacific Northwest, and they immediately produced a newspaper in Wallace that reflected an enveloping civilization and their previous newspaper influences and experiences. On the *Oregonian,* the Dunns had worked under noted editor Harvey W. Scott, one of the most prominent editors of his era (1865-1910),[9] and the Dunns obviously brought some of his influences with them to Wallace. For example, Scott was strongly opposed to women's suffrage, was strongly Republican, and was unsympathetic to the demands of labor;[10] and the Dunns displayed these same tendencies as co-publishers of the *Free Press.* It can also be argued that the Dunns were influenced by the "California" style of writing typical of Mark Twain and Bret Harte of earlier years, since the *Free Press* they produced always included a mixture of tall tales, adventure, and colorful, descriptive language, indicating their inclination to "deal with the amusing,

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[4]Ibid.

[5]Wallace *Free Press,* March 16, 1889.

[6]Barbara Cloud, "Establishing the Frontier Newspaper: A Study of Eight Western Territories," *Journalism Quarterly* 61 (1984), 805-810.

[7]Barron Beshoar, "The Strife and Struggle of a Newspaper in the Old West," *The American West* 10 (September 1973), 45.

[8]*History of North Idaho,* 1211.

[9]*Dictionary of American Biography VIII* (New York, 1935), 491.

[10]Ibid.

rather than the serious, aspects of life."[11]

Their newspaper was carefully edited and included a wide variety of news gathered by an excellent network of correspondents in surrounding mining camps. It could scarcely be called excessive, passionate, or sensational either editorially or otherwise, indicating their awareness of the style of such papers as the New York *Times*, New York *Herald*, and other eastern papers. In fact, each edition of the *Free Press* usually included lengthy feature stories picked up from eastern papers as well as briefly rewritten straight news. Their interest in the riches, heroes, and beauty of the West also hinted that they were more than slightly aware of Horace Greeley and his New York *Tribune*'s promotion of the frontier.

Not only did the Dunns start the first newspaper in Wallace; they also founded the second. This was the Coeur d'Alene *Miner*, started in 1890, just a year after they sold the *Free Press* to a publisher from a nearby town.[12] The *Miner* had sponsorship much like the *Free Press*, but following the pattern of partisan newspaper development described by Cloud in a study of nearby Washington Territory newspapers,[13] the second newspaper in Wallace was founded for political purposes. The paper was sponsored by the Republican party after the *Press* abruptly shifted its support to the Democratic party under its new publisher just before election time.[14] During their two years as publishers of the *Free Press*, the Dunns had given equal coverage to Republican and Democratic candidates, meetings, etc., but had routinely endorsed Republican candidates at election time. With the *Miner*, they clearly established a partisan press in Wallace.

The Dunns seemed sincerely impressed by the beauty and lore of the West, the tall tales of adventures and heroics of mountain men and prospectors, the exploits and accomplishments of individuals, and especially stories of self-made wealth. The *Free Press* carried such items in each Saturday edition as long as the Dunns were its publishers. Examples of headlines to be found on such stories included: "Men of Mark. Some of Our Great Men–How They Got Their Start," "The Way to Wealth. A Sure Way to Get Rich and Save Part of Your Earnings," "How Colonel Kelley Made a Cool Million Dollars in a Mining Speculation," "Fortunes in Mining. A Few of the Men Who Have Made Fortunes in Mining," "Jay Gould. The Method and Means Which Have Won Him Greatness," "How to Get Rich," "Cyrus W. Field. How He Rose from Poverty to Great Wealth," "A. B. Steinberger. The Remarkable

[11]Henry C. Merwin, *The Life of Bret Harte* (Boston, 1911), 194.

[12]*History of North Idaho*, 1212.

[13]Barbara Cloud, "A Party Press? Not Just Yet! Political Publishing on the Frontier," *Journalism History* 7 (1980), 54.

[14]Wallace *Press*, November 13, 1980.

Career of a Typical Adventurer," "William R. Hearst. How He Made a Great Success of the San Francisco *Examiner*."

In the beginning, as they had contracted to do, the Dunns went seriously about the business of promoting the town to the outside world. Their first edition carried an "Introductory" noting that "indeed no better way is known to place before the outside world the resources of a new section than through the columns of a local press." The stated aim of the paper was "to give truthful accounts of the resources of the Coeur d'Alene; to represent the interests of the Upper South Fork...; to give local, mining, and general news of interest at home and abroad...." The comments, signed by the Dunns as co-publishers, added that "no exaggerated accounts" of the section would be published. They also wrote that "The *Free Press* claims that independence which grows more popular with each election among the voters and leads to the support for public service of those men only whose integrity and honesty are known...,"[15] leading one to assume that although they were "hired" as town boosters, they had not obligated themselves politically.

A separate story on page one of their first edition also mentioned the paper's aims, saying:

> In the future weekly issues of this paper, it is designed to write of all the business interests; to commence with the early prospectors, whose courage and faith were never shaken by the many adverse storms...in the ultimate result of their discoveries. From the horde of adventurers who made up the stampede in the early spring of '85, only about a dozen genuine miners or prospectors remain....They represent now, as in the past, such elements of manhood as place them in the front of whatever they undertake, viz: courage, endurance, perseverance....The history of mining camps in America has no parallel to this. There have been no blanks drawn in the discoveries of mines; no failure of any mining enterprise within the districts....[16]

The first edition also listed a number of businesses, with a brief descriptive statement about each, and carried what appeared to be a page–one editorial praising the town as something of a "Garden of Eden," saying, "The location of Wallace is unsurpassed in any country. Nature seems to have omitted nothing. Pure water, invigorating air, beautiful scenery, a level tract walled by high hills at a safe distance–these go far toward making a pleasant home...." The item also mentioned that the town already had a population of 1200-1500 people and

[15] Wallace *Free Press*, July 2, 1887.
[16] Ibid.

a modern post office with "the latest patent call and lock boxes."[17] The Dunns were obviously living up to their end of the bargain with Colonel Wallace by serving as town boosters from the start.

The first edition of the *Free Press* was typical of practically every edition the Dunns produced. It included a poem, a tall tale reprinted from the *California Pioneer* of 1850, a list of property transfers, a personals column made up of general town gossip, a variety of news items from area mining camps, and rewrites of news and feature stories from newspapers throughout the country and abroad. In all, the Dunns produced a balanced package of news in their four-page paper, which included about one-third advertising.[18] The second issue of the paper carried, as promised, a column-length editorial praising the prospectors as self-confident, brave, intelligent men who most often faced unknown dangers alone in their search for the great mineral strikes they produced. "To the prospector the western empire owes its birth, its population and its prosperity....The prospectors of the Upper South Fork...who, during the dark days of its early history went many days hungry...can look back with pride upon their work,"[19] the editorial said.

The "personal journalism" characteristic of most other frontier newspapers was also found in the *Free Press* published by the Dunns, whether they were reporting a fire, barroom shooting, baseball game, or the death of one of the town's well-known animals. In reporting a brush fire that had threatened the lumber mill, the *Free Press* said:

> Sparks were hurled into the air in all directions, many lighting on and among the piles of lumber. In the meantime, Mr. Howes and his faithful mill men were manfully and strenuously battling with the sparks and flames....For two solid hours they kept a steady stream of water dashing and splashing in all directions, scarcely a word was spoken, every nerve was strained, and but one thought seemed to be in the minds of all–the property must be saved and their prompt and determined efforts were all that saved it from being a mass of ruin. Mr. Carter is to be congratulated for having such faithful men in charge of his interests, and well may he feel assured that they are just as safe with them as though he were here in person....[20]

The *Free Press* report of a body being found in the street answered all possible questions for the readers (as well as the coroner): "Sunday

[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid., July 9, 1887.
[20] Ibid.

morning the dead body of Barney Burns was found lying a few feet from the porch of Fred Stevens' hotel....From the position of the body it was evident that the deceased had fallen from the porch, a distance of about five feet, and struck the ground as he lay, when found, face downward in the dust. Being stunned by the fall, and under the influence of liquor, he was probably unable to move, and the closing of apertures for breathing caused death by suffocation...."[21]

In commenting on the nearby mining camp of Mullan, the *Free Press* reported:

> There are more old bachelors brousing around here who have never been soothed by the cooing of a prattling babe than in any camp in the wild West. There are quite a number of those who would marry, and they are desirable property for the fair sex, too, but they do not seem to pull the right strings to drown their sorrows in the charms of a pretty woman. They are too much westernized, and in this hope fadeth like a miner's pants. A few marriageable young ladies could make a square deal here.[22]

When reporting the arrest of a former sheriff by the new sheriff, the Dunns wrote that "Sheriff Hanley had several close calls, one bullet glazing his head and another going through his coat sleeve....All the officers deserve credit for the cool manner in which they acted, especially Hanley, who would have been justified in shooting Matt Guthrie instead of hitting him over the head."[23] The loss of a horse in a trail accident was explained by the *Free Press* in great detail also: "Dad Acres lost one of his best horses on the trail between Wallace and Burke last Thursday. The animal was pretty heavily loaded and in some manner lost its balance and went down the side of the mountain, a distance of over 100 feet, almost perpendicular, killing it instantly."[24]

The personal descriptive style was evident in the stories picked up from other sources also. One such item was selected from *Railway Age* and described a large Indian cemetery in Dakota"...where the bones of many thousand Sioux lay bleaching in the sun....The cemetery is several hundred years old and includes the bones of countless braves whose spirits have gone to the happy hunting grounds. The Indians are not buried, but are wrapped in blankets, placed on a scaffold of sticks about six feet high, where they remain undisturbed. On every hand can be seen hundreds of bleached skeletons and grinning skulls...."[25]

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[21] Ibid., July 23, 1887.
[22] Ibid., August 6, 1887.
[23] Ibid., September 24, 1887.
[24] Ibid., October 22, 1887.
[25] Ibid., December 10, 1887.

The Dunns were especially sensitive to the fate of animals, and often mentioned one of heroic stature. When a stray mule was found dead, they ran an "obituary" saying that the mule,

> ...whose form became so familiar to our people last winter, lies a corpse in the South Fork, just below the first ford east of town. The life of a mule is never a happy one. Born without pride of ancestry or hope of posterity, they seem to be doomed to the hardest of labor and shameful abuse. But this one, which now sleeps in a watery grave, seems to have been more unfortunate than his brothers. Having served his master well for many years, it would seem that he was deserving of some protection when his strength failed him and he passed down the western slope of life. But such was not his lot. He battled with the elements during the past winter in a manner worthy of one of more noble origin. He conquered, but scarcely had the conflict ended when he succumbed. Some claim that while fording the river, in search of fresh fields in which to forage, he was carried away by the strong current and drowned, others that in a fit of despondency he threw himself into the clear waters, convinced of the vanity of life and determined to end this struggle for a mere existence....[26]

When calling for a ridge across a nearby creek, the *Free Press* did so much for the sake of the animals, saying, "No bridge has yet been built across Nine Mile Creek where the wagon road to town crosses that stream. Drift has lodged against the footlog and it is necessary to ford a deep pool of water to cross. Teamsters justly complain of this, as it simply amounts to cruelty to force animals into water in this cold weather...."[27]

Each edition of the *Free Press* was filled with news of new gold or silver strikes, the fast-approaching railroad, the coming of regular mail service, the opening of a new business, etc. Editorials praising the growing town, presumably in accordance with the Dunns' agreement with Colonel Wallace to promote the town in an attempt to attract new settlers,[28] were also weekly features of the paper. A typical comment noted that "the sound of the hammer is heard in all directions, mingled with the buzzing. A glance over the town shows improvement in every quarter. New buildings are under way, additions are being placed to those already up, older houses are receiving the benefit of paint, streets are being prepared for use, vacant lots are being cleared of stumps and logs, and in fact, an air of general improvement pervades the whole

[26]Ibid., May 5, 1888.
[27]Ibid., December 3, 1887.
[28]Ibid., March 16, 1889.

camp...."[29]

On another occasion, predicting greater prosperity with the coming of the railroad, the *Free Press* mentioned that "the whistle of the locomotive will ere long announce a new era in the history of mines destined to astonish the world with their output."[30] Such reports of rich strikes and the glorified life of the prospector eventually led to a brief setback in news service for the Dunns, as the *Free Press* reported that its Mullan correspondent had "joined the stampede to the new strikes, which accounts for the absence of our usual collection of interesting items from that camp."[31]

For the first several months, practically every issue of the *Free Press* made prominent mention of Colonel Wallace, whether boasting of his fishing exploits ("Colonel Wallace caught 247 trout in Placer Creek Thursday"[32]); his election to an office; his offer to donate land for a school, church or hospital, etc. ("Just back of Colonel Wallace's residence is part of the body of a tree, cut down by the Colonel himself, which measured something like 225 feet in length"[33]). It certainly appears that the Dunns were appreciative of Colonel Wallace's sponsorship of their paper. At the same time, the *Free Press*, for each week during the first several months, carried a two-column advertisement for the Wallace Townsite Company, apparently part of the agreement by Colonel Wallace to help ensure that total revenues would reach $1,800 during the first six months.

The townsite advertisement was aimed at attracting buyers for his land, and proclaimed Wallace as the "center of the Coeur d'Alene mining district, the terminus of the Coeur d'Alene Railway and destined to be to this section what Leadville is to Colorado." The ad, saying the town was "beautifully situated in a wide and pleasant valley with the best of water and timber in abundance," also boasted of its first-class school facilities. There apparently was no school, however, as the *Free Press* published an editorial on March 31, 1888, (after the ad had been running for nine months) calling for a school, not for the sake of education, but as a means of attracting more settlers. The editorial said, "...Situated as Wallace is, it is easy to see how a good school...would be the means within a year or so of bringing hundreds of families here....This is a matter well worthy of attention from a business standpoint. A good liberal investment in a schoolhouse would, we believe, bring a handsome return to property owners and business men."[34] A few

[29]Ibid., July 16, 1887.
[30]Ibid., July 23, 1887.
[31]Ibid., September 3, 1887.
[32]Ibid., August 20, 1887.
[33]Ibid., December 24, 1887.
[34]Ibid., March 31, 1888.

months later the paper carried a report of a town meeting in which Colonel Wallace offered to donate a lot for the school building and in which the school board had agreed to hire a teacher for a six-month term. The story ended with the comment that the building"...will be credit to our town, and will no doubt be the means of bringing many families to reside here...."[35]

The relationship between the Dunns and Colonel Wallace took a sharp turn in the spring of 1889 when the Dunns somehow learned that Colonel Wallace's title to the property he had been selling was in doubt. They quickly and prominently displayed the news on page one,[36] and it created a heated feud between Wallace and the Dunns as well as between Wallace and other citizens who had bought property from him. The squabble eventually forced Colonel Wallace's hasty departure from the state, long before it was finally determined that he indeed had not held clear title to the land.

Colonel Wallace was immediately critical of the Dunns for their initial attack on him, and in a letter to the *Free Press* revealed their original agreement which brought the first newspaper to Wallace. The Dunns ran the letter on page one and did not deny that Colonel Wallace had helped start the newspaper. They did assert their independence, however, saying, "We owe no debt of gratitude to Colonel Wallace. He never paid us one dollar for which he did not get value received, nor have we accepted a favor from him which we did not stand ready to return. The starting of a newspaper in Wallace was purely a business proposition by both him and us...."[37]

The Dunns explained their agreement with Colonel Wallace in detail, noting that they had been promised free rent and the guarantee of $1,800 in combined patronage from all sources during the six months starting with the first issue. In addition, Wallace had agreed to buy six subscriptions to the *Free Press* for a year at $3 each. At the end of the six months, the Dunns said they had purchased their building and lot from Wallace for $550. They also pointed out that Colonel Wallace had withdrawn the patronage (advertising) of his townsite company from the paper nearly a year before. In addition, they noted that he had known about his title problems for several months, but had kept them secret and continued to sell (and generously give away) more lots.[38]

Regular stories on the land title problems and resulting claim jumping filled page one of the *Free Press* for several weeks, and apparently Colonel Wallace felt threatened by some of his dissatisfied customers,

[35]Ibid., June 2, 1888.
[36]Ibid., March 9, 1889.
[37]Ibid.
[38]Ibid.

as he began to wear and randomly discharge a pistol about town, for which he was again reproached by the Dunns in the pages of the *Free Press*.[39]

One might assume that the Dunns attacked Colonel Wallace so strongly because they, too, had been used by the Colonel in helping to lure people to the area to purchase what turned out to be untitled land. Not only had they been duped themselves, they had played a role in deceiving others. Whatever their reason, by taking issue with the town's founder and leading citizen, they certainly seem to have placed moral "right" above loyalty to their benefactor and perhaps even above the secure existence of their newspaper. Such a stance is not surprising if one accepts the premise that the Dunns were of the "California school" of writers, described in *The Life of Bret Harte* as "young gentlemen...essentially men of honor," who in public matters "took the high ground."[40]

The Dunns, by taking such a stand, fall into historian Oliver Knight's mold of "active agents" in the civilization of the frontier.[41] Knight contended that regardless of the founding motivation, frontier newspapers that campaigned for better transportation, schools, churches, etc., helped to facilitate social change and further a sense of community by encouraging and reinforcing their efforts toward urbanization, even though much of what was written was "puffery, intended to encourage immigration into the area...." In promoting towns, Knight said, "editors bleated repetitive refrains about their communities," calling them the "garden spots of the world," boasting of their "unexampled richness of soil or timber or minerals or salubrious climate" and predicting that the town was "marked by destiny to be a great metropolis...."[42] The Dunns were surely guilty of such puffery, but seem not to have given up their sense of right.

Wallace's title problems were not the only issue on which the Dunns took a moral stand. When the nearby town of Burke announced the search for a minister, the *Free Press* noted that "It would doubtless be an excellent field for missionary work, as it is practically virgin territory...."[43] They also editorially condemned prostitution in Wallace saying, "A boisterous dance hall in the business center of Wallace, with rooms above occupied by women whose characters are too plainly apparent by every act and feature, and who frequently appear before the windows in indecent exhibit, to the disgust of respectable people in

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[39] Ibid., June 8, 1889.

[40] Merwin, 195.

[41] Oliver Knight, "The Frontier Newspaper as a Catalyst in Social Change," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 58:2 (April 1967), 75.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Richard G. Magnuson, *Coeur d'Alene Diary* (Portland, Oregon, 1969), 264.

the community, is not conducive to a high moral standard."[44] The editorial did not totally solve the problem if it had any effect at all, as one such "dance hall" still operated openly in Wallace in the summer of 1988.

The *Free Press* of June 29, 1889, carried an abrupt announcement that the Dunns had sold the paper. It might easily be assumed that the Dunns were pressured out of business in some way due to their problems with Colonel Wallace, and that possibility may exist. However, the amount of advertising in the paper did not decline over a three-month period immediately prior to the sale, and no other evidence of economic pressure is evident. Apparently the Dunns did not feel physically threatened, as they remained in town and were involved in other business interests.[45] Among the positions held by the Dunns over the years, based on frequent mention in the papers, were postmaster, town clerk, and mayor.

Although it was not evident in the brief announcement of the sale, it soon became clear that the *Free Press* had been purchased by Adam Aulbach, publisher of the Coeur d'Alene *Sun* in nearby Murray, through friends in Wallace. He immediately changed the name of the paper to the *Press* and personally began publishing it on September 28, 1889, after it had been managed by Ed Tibbals for a few months. Under Aulbach, the *Press* changed in many ways. At about the same time, by front-page news accounts, the town of Wallace was becoming more typical of the lawless, rip-roaring mining towns depicted in frontier movies. Headlines hinting of the publisher's interests and of the events of the period included "Skulls Cracked," "One Dago Dead," "An Awful Tragedy," "Foul Slander," "Death in a Mine," "Death from Gas," "A Ride to Death," "The Lying Dunns," and "A Trainload of Scabs and Hessians Arrive." Headlines for less dramatic events, such as county or city meetings or routine banking or mining news, were often little more than labels such as "Banking News," "County Board," "City Fathers," "District Court," or "Banking."

Wallace had grown from a town of 1,200–1,500 in 1887 to 3,000 by 1890, and boasted a list of businesses which included six hotels, one bank, one preacher, one teacher, five doctors, two lawyers, one drug store, one brewery, eight restaurants, and twenty-eight saloons.[46] Much of the new population was working class, brought in by large mining companies, which had brought out the prospectors, to work the mines. There is also evidence that a variety of other characters had joined the stampede to Wallace and surrounding camps, as fabled gunfighter-

[44] Ibid., 135.
[45] Ibid., 96.
[46] Ibid.

lawman Wyatt Earp was a registered voter in the town in 1890.[47]

Aulbach brought to Wallace a long, colorful, and somewhat combative newspaper past. At age forty-three, he was at the peak of his success, publishing or owning an interest in newspapers at Wallace, Murray and nearby Wardner. He had first come to the Coeur d'Alene region in 1884, setting up the second newspaper in Murray. His arrival in Murray could not have been better timed, as even before he published the first edition of the *Sun*, the editor of the town's only other newspaper shot and killed his printer in a pay dispute and was eventually sent to prison, leaving the town to Aulbach.[48]

The outspoken Aulbach wasted little time in taking advantage of his position. He printed an editorial in his first edition condemning the former competing publisher, saying, "The crazy crank who killed poor Enright has at last realized his awful position and was crying like a child all day yesterday. Whether he was lamenting the death of his victim or his own chances of a speedy death on the gallows I would not undertake to say. His feelings will not bring poor Enright back to life. There is no sympathy for the murderer in this community."[49]

Unlike the Dunns, about whom little history has been written, Aulbach's newspaper past has been reasonably well documented, partly by his own unfinished and unpublished memoirs. He started his career as a compositor on the St. Louis *Republican* at age 16, but soon left that job to join a wagon train headed for Oregon. He never arrived in Oregon, however, choosing to search for riches in the gold fields instead. He failed to strike it rich, and ended up working at a variety of jobs before finally joining the army in 1864. After serving with the Union army in Utah, he remained there to work on an anti-Mormon newspaper. When he realized he was in phyical danger there, he moved to San Francisco, where he worked as a compositor on the *Chronicle*. While there, he drafted the constitution and bylaws for the local printers' union, which later grew into the National Typographical Union.[50]

At the *Chronicle*, Aulbach seems to have adopted some of the characteristics (pro-labor, anti-Chinese) of its publishers, the deYoung brothers, who in turn had been influenced by James Gordon Bennett's New York *Herald*. Both papers had reputations for siding with the masses or have-nots in class disputes; reporting heartily and bluntly on crime, sin and corruption: and frequently attacking competing newspapers and their editors.[51] Aulbach often displayed these same

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[47] Ibid., 107.

[48] *History of North Idaho*, 992.

[49] Coeur d'Alene *Sun*, July 8, 1884.

[50] Adam Aulbach, incomplete and unpublished memoirs, 1-42.

[51] Mark W. Hall, "The San Francisco Chronicle: Its Fight for the 1879 Constitution," *Journalism*

characteristics as publisher of the *Press*. From the *Chronicle*, he went to the San Jose *Herald*, the Philadelphia *Record*, the New York *Herald*, and perhaps others, before heading back West in 1883. He printed a paper briefly in Belknap, Montana, before arriving in Murray in the summer of 1884.[52]

Under Aulbach the Wallace *Press* quickly became more outspoken, especially editorially and especially against other editors. Through his name-calling attacks on competing editors, Aulbach personified historian Robert Karolevitz's frontier editor, whose "behavior did little to raise the public esteem of newspapermen, but it certainly entertained the public."[53] Historian John Tebbel's list of characteristics of New York's newspaper giants of the pre-Civil War era also closely resembles those of Aulbach: restless, egocentric and combative, politically ambitious, partisan, and sometimes guilty of excesses.[54]

Aulbach's violent editorial attacks were fired in all directions, and frequently at the Dunns, especially after they started another Wallace newspaper in competition with him just a year after selling the *Free Press*. Aulbach pointed out the development of the new paper editorially, saying, "...We are informed...that the Dunns Brothers received a clean thousand dollars to publish a Republican paper and nothing else....[55] The Dunns countered in the *Miner* by accusing Aulbach of "flopping from a loud Republican" to a Democrat just three weeks before an election "for $300 for the paper and the man." They added that "the Democratic party got the worst of the bargain at that small figure...."[56] With that exchange, partisan journalism was begun in Wallace.

In the midst of his editorial feud with the Dunns, Aulbach wrote that his rule of life was to "beware of entrance to a quarrel, but being in, make the fur fly."[57] He proceeded to do just that, attacking the Dunns in practically every issue, calling them at first "schoolboys," but quickly moving on to such names as parasites, asses, birds of prey, hypocrites, ingrates, backbiters, mangy pups, etc., and regularly headlining his attacks "The Lying Dunns." Aulbach wrote that the Dunns "have the nature of coyotes instead of men, and truth and fairness are as foreign to them as intelligence or manhood."[58] He condemned the Dunns for "turning" on Colonel Wallace more than three years before, saying,

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Quarterly 46 (1969), 505-510.

[52] N. Avon Wilson, "The Pack Mule Press of the Coeur d'Alenes," Student Research Paper, University of Idaho, 1938, 19-20.

[53] Robert F. Karolevitz, *Newspapering in the Old West* (New York, 1965), 15.

[54] John Tebbel, "The Giants of New York," in *The Compact History of the American Newspaper* (1963), 94.

[55] Wallace *Press*, November 13, 1890.

[56] Ibid., December 11, 1890.

[57] Ibid., December 4, 1890.

[58] Ibid., March 14, 1891.

"...When the first cloud of trouble overcame him they turned round like the dogs they are and bit his hand....Never perhaps in the history of the West was there baser ingratitude shown than these two Dunns have displayed toward Col. Wallace. They now flaunt their ill-gotten gains in the face of the community, crowing of a victory over their benefactor...."[59]

Aulbach's pen was especially sharp in one editorial attack on an item printed in the Dunns' *Miner*. He described it as "vomited forth out of the filthy mouths of the Dunns like offal out of a sewer. These ingrates, common panderers, have no other motive in life but to crawl on their slimy bellies and hiss out their spite, seeking to poison every atmosphere they breathe; their low nature has no higher ambition than to lie: their putrid minds no nobler aim than to traduce their betters; men spit upon the world like lice and other human vermin; men who are a curse to themselves and the community in which they live; men devoid of every vestige of honor and who know no shame."[60]

Aulbach's angry attacks on the Dunns apparently did not represent an overall community feeling, however, as Aulbach's own *Press* reported J. L. Dunn's election as chairman of the town's trustees (mayor) in April 1891.[61]

The Dunns, on the other hand, rarely attacked other editors or indulged in name-calling. However, they did both in taking issue with Aulbach on one political matter while he was publisher of the *Sun*, saying, "It doesn't look well in print to call a man a liar, sheep, muttonhead, or any vile epithet the depraved mind can muster....The press should set a different example. But a man can convict himself if he so desires. The editor of the *Sun* has had plenty of rope. See what he has done." They then proceeded to print a number of contradictory Aulbach statements.[62]

Aulbach, on the other hand, was indiscriminate in his attacks on other newspapers. He often attacked the Spokane Falls *Review*, once calling it "a cheat, hypocrite and foul monster, which seeks to tear down everything that does not pay tribute to its capacious maw....Its breath is the breath of a leper, and its touch begets the dry rot...."[63] He had no sympathy for his fellow editors in hard times, or at least never displayed any. When commenting that the Osburn *Statesman* was on the verge of failure, he said "it is writhing like a rattlesnake with its head cut off. The body is in terrible agony, and the tail rattles the

[59] Ibid., July 2, 1892.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid., April 18, 1891.
[62] Wallace *Free Press*, November 3, 1888.
[63] Wallace *Press*, July 7, 1890.

death roll."[64]

Aulbach even took issue with the Spokane postmaster for closing for lunch during the noon hour, although the post office was seventy-five miles away. He said the postmaster was "either a crank or a fool, or perhaps both....and by reason of his meanness, is unfitted for the duties devolving upon him."[65] The Dunns had complained of mail service also, though less severely than Aulbach, saying, "The mail continues irregular though we see no good reason why it should be so....With ordinary business management there is no reason why the mail cannot be carried through Fourth of July Canyon with the same regularity as any other route."[66]

On the issue of Chinese labor, Aulbach was outspoken as usual. In the *Press* he said the Coeur d'Alene region was "in no more need of Chinamen than it is of a Mafia society,"[67] but that was mild compared to an earlier *Sun* editorial in which he said:

> ...As cooks they would oft times be very acceptable; as laundrymen, they would be convenient; as pack animals on the different trails they would be bonanzas. But they had better stay away just the same....This camp...will never feel the curse of cheap coolie labor....John Chinaman got into the California mines, into many other mines, but he must not think of attempting to visit into those of Northern Idaho. If he insists on coming, however, let him bring a roast hog, plenty of firecrackers and colored paper, and all the essentials of a first-class Chinese funeral. He need not bother to bring the corpse. It will be in readiness....[68]

The Aulbach-produced *Press* focused more on the "hard" news of the day, dropping the tall tales, poetry, heroic adventure features, and most of the gossip-filled reports from surrounding camps. These were replaced with more news on political issues, more mining news from around the country and world, more reports of saloon fights, mining accidents, rich mineral strikes, crime of any and all sorts, the buying and selling of claims, and the growing problems between the working-class miners and the large, corporate mine owners. Aulbach apparently brought with him from the county seat of Murray the county printing contracts, as he regularly placed prominently in bold print on page two the claim that "The *Press* is the official newspaper of Shoshone County and the town of Wallace." Meanwhile, the *Press* regularly carried

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[64] Ibid., March 12, 1892.
[65] Ibid., February 8, 1890.
[66] Wallace *Free Press*, January 21, 1888.
[67] Wallace *Press*, April 4, 1891.
[68] Coeur d'Alene *Sun*, March 22, 1885, quoted in Wilson, 27.

large amounts of legal advertisements.

It was the dispute between labor and the mine owners which drew national attention to Wallace and Aulbach, and eventually led to his downfall as publisher of the *Press*. Aulbach, not surprisingly, chose the side of labor in a heated dispute between the miners and mine operators involving wages and union recognition in the spring of 1892. In announcing his stand on the side of labor, he wrote that he would "rather feed upon the vapors of a dungeon with a toad" than to side with the owners, who he said were "devoid of every sense of moral, social or manly attributes."[69]

Aulbach also harshly attacked the governor of Idaho for expressing support for the mine owners, saying, "His Accidental Excellency, Governor Willey (by the forebearance of God and the stupidity of the Republican Party, Chief Executive of Idaho), by the position he has taken in regard to the labor troubles in the Coeur d'Alenes, by his crepuscular reasoning from false premises, backed up by distorted, untrue statements of facts, has not only shown himself incapable, prejudiced, unjust and the laboring man's most malignant foe, but has forever destroyed his party in the state of Idaho...."[70]

Meanwhile, the Dunns were calling for reason in the matter, urging the parties to "settle down to a conference table within the district and argue the subject...."[71] The Dunns "usually...favored the mine owners, but every once in a while they would truly take a mighty crack at them."[72]

Aulbach's attacks on the owners and the "scab" labor they were importing grew more vicious each week, and the mine owners eventually obtained an injunction preventing the *Press* for commenting further on the labor dispute. This prompted Aulbach to write that "...We have the sad Russian spectacle of a muzzled press at the beck of a combination of wealth...."[73] He printed the *Press* on the same date with two blank columns which had been reserved for his commentary on the issue.

The injunction drew national attention, and the New York *World* printed an editorial in support of Aulbach, which he proudly displayed on page one of the *Press* under the headline "The Press Restraint. An Opportunity and a Duty for the Publisher of the Paper." The *World* editorial read:

> Adam Aulbach, editor of the Wallace (Idaho) *Press*, has a

[69]Wallace *Press*, April 23, 1892.
[70]Ibid., July 2, 1892.
[71]Magnuson, 183.
[72]Ibid., 184.
[73]Wallace *Press*, May 14, 1892.

> duty and an opportunity. The owners of the Coeur d'Alene mines have some controversy with their workmen. Mr. Aulbach, in his newspaper has commented upon the controversy, taking the side of the men. The mine owners have therefore induced a court to enjoin Mr. Aulbach, to forbid him from criticizing them, and to suppress an edition of his newspaper. At this point, Mr. Aulbach's highest duty is to fight. He owes it to himself, to the public, and to liberty to disregard the injunction, print the truth as he understands it, and, if necessary, go to jail for contempt of court. A court which would attempt in this way to interfere with the liberty of the press deserves contempt, and the more widely its wrongful course is advertised the more generally will it incur contempt. The WALLACE *PRESS* has a right to comment upon matters of public interest. If it libels anybody, it is liable under both civil and criminal statutes. But it is not the right of any court to suppress the newspaper or by injuction to forbid it to comment upon a particular matter not in hearing before the court. Against such a wrong the editor is bound to make the sturdiest fight he can, and if he goes to jail in such a cause, incarceration will honor, not disgrace him....Mr. Aulbach ought to resist this tyranny at the threshold.[74]

Violence finally erupted in the mine dispute when two non-union miners were killed in an explosion. The *Press* headlined the story: "Two Men Blown to Bits, Non-Union Men. Mystery as to How Explosion Occurred. Bodies Fully Mangled."[75] The trouble reached a peak in July when a non-union miner (called a scab by the *Press*, as was the custom by Aulbach when reference was made to non-union workers) was severely beaten by union men on July 9. The beating triggered an all-out battle which lasted several days and involved hundreds of union and non-union miners. The violence left six dead, seventeen wounded,[76] four hundred arrested, and six hundred non-union workers chased from the area.[77]

The *Press* filled page one with a report of the trouble, prominently inserting near the beginning of the lead story the statement that "The scab [was] entirely to blame" for the fight that started the shooting. The same issue included yet another brief editorial attack on the mine owners which said they "are trying to reduce miners' wages and increase their own profits, so that they may have more money to squander on panderers, politicians and poker."[78]

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[74]New York *World*, May 1892, quoted in Wallace *Press*, June 4, 1892.
[75]Wallace *Press*, June 25, 1892.
[76]Ibid., July 16, 1892.
[77]Magnuson, 236-237.
[78]Wallace *Press*, July 16, 1892.

Another Aulbach editorial in what was to be his final edition of the *Press* had a somewhat subdued tone and at least mildly criticized labor for the outbreak of violence. Aulbach wrote:

> ...However bitter the controversy between capital and labor may be, labor always gets a further setback by resorting to arms and bloodshed....Although the provocation may be most grievous sometimes, it is much better to endure the ills that exist than to fly to more serious ones. No domestic cause was ever benefited by violence....The vast body of the people always sympathize with labor organizations, but they cannot harmonize with bloody strife and destruction of property. Labor must be more conservative and reasoning, and capital should not try to crush because it has the power....The friends of the miners' unions had hoped for a peaceful solution of the difficulty between themselves and the mine owners, and they deeply deplore the present condition of affairs....Whoever provoked the conflict at Frisco and Gem ought to be punished, but it should be a fair and impartial investigation. Let the law get at the bottom facts....Let justice be done.[79]

The governor responded to the outbreak of violence by declaring martial law, and as many as 1,000 troops were moved into the area to restore order and arrest the instigators.[80] Along with the trouble and troops, of course, came a number of newspapermen, representing the Chicago *Herald*, New York *World*, San Francisco *Examiner*, the Associated Press, and a number of others.[81] Aulbach had previously served as the correspondent for the Associated Press, but the Portland *Oregonian* had protested his work by refusing to print his articles because it felt he was too sympathetic with the labor causes.[82]

Others apparently felt Aulbach had leaned too far to the labor side also. State Adjutant General E. J. Curtis, who had visited the Wallace area before the violent outbreak and who commanded the troops who enforced martial law in the area, openly called Aulbach a murderer for the role he played in inciting the riots.[83] Others obviously shared the opinion. "Undoubtedly, the people of Wallace considered the editor of the Wallace *Press* to some degree responsible for the violence and the subsequent military rule they endured," concluded N. Avon Wilson in a 1932 study of newspapers in the region.[84]

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[79]Ibid.
[80]Magnuson, 230.
[81]Ibid., 233.
[82]Ibid., 239.
[83]Ibid.
[84]Wilson, 42.

That seems a valid conclusion, as Aulbach left Wallace without printing another issue of the *Press*. He moved back to Murray, where he revived the *Sun* and published it for a few more years before the shrinking town forced its demise. He died there in what had become all but a ghost town in 1933, having served as mayor, county commissioner, and state representative .[85]

The Wallace *Free Press* with the Dunn brothers as publishers (1887-1889) was as much a frontier newspaper as any of its era in the creation (sponsored), function (town boosterism), and content; yet its publishers do not fit squarely into the generalization of frontier editors made by historian William Lyon in his 1980 study of the frontier press.[86] Lyon said that frontier editors "proclaimed one set of values and lived another" because they were "subservient to an economic or political master."[87] Although the Dunns were assisted in the founding of their newspaper by Colonel Wallace, they did not surrender their values. They seem also to have been reformers to some degree, whereas Lyon concluded that frontier editors were not reformers.[88]

Aulbach, on the other hand, was the product of another era of frontier journalism, being a generation older than the Dunns and a veteran of many other mining camps in his younger days. As publisher of the Wallace *Press* (1889-1892), he presented an image similar to that of the frontier editor described by Lyon: individualistic, competitive, and surly at times. "He stood among the colorful men striving for recognition and influence in frontier society; but changing conditions of journalism, his own individualistic personality, his itinerancy, and his lax business methods deprived him of the stature he sought," Lyon wrote of the frontier editor.[89] Such was the case with Aulbach in Wallace, Idaho. It could even be argued that Aulbach, a former mining camp vigilante[90] and union organizer who boasted of keeping a Spencer seven-shooter in his office,[91] symbolized the end of frontier journalism in America, and that Wallace, Idaho, was its deathplace.

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[85] Ibid., 46-48.

[86] William H. Lyon, "The Significance of Newspapers on the American Frontier," *Journal of the West* 19 (April 1980), 3-13.

[87] Ibid., 12.

[88] Ibid.

[89] William H. Lyon, *The Pioneer Editor in Missouri 1808-1860* (Columbus, 1965), quoted in Huntzicker, 33.

[90] Aulbach memoirs, 14.

[91] Ibid., 35.

George Seldes and the Winter Soldier Brigade: The Press Criticism of *In Fact*, 1940-1950

By Pamela A. Brown*

In recent years the field of journalism has rediscovered George Seldes, most notably after he was interviewed about his memories of journalist John Reed in the 1981 film "Reds." Since that film's release, "scores of reporters and historians have sat in the book-cluttered living room of his red brick home recording his remembrances of such political figures as Leon Trotsky and Benito Mussolini and such writers as Ernest Hemingway and Sinclair Lewis." [1] Though most known today for his books, Seldes spent twenty years as a newspaper reporter. He began his career as a cub reporter in 1909, working for the Pittsburgh *Leader*. In 1917 he went to work for the Chicago *Tribune* Army Edition in Paris, covering World War I, and from 1919 to 1929 he reported events in Europe for the *Tribune*'s Foreign News Service. He left reporting in 1929 to write for his first book.

However, it is noteworthy that attention has been focused on Seldes the man rather than on his work. Lee Brown's history of press criticism, *The Reluctant Reformation*, gives short shrift to Seldes' work. He notes without discussion that "Seldes produced a weekly newsletter, *In Fact: An Antidote for Falsehood in the Daily Press*, and wrote several books critical of the press." About twenty pages later Brown writes: "If press criticism languished during World War II, it was nascent during the last half of the 1940s and 1950s."[2] Yet Seldes began writing critically about the press in the 1930s including publishing numerous articles and books by the mid-1940s. In addition, between 1940 and 1950, he published 521 issues of *In Fact*, each issue replete with detailed and harsh press criticism. Seldes' regular and substan-

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[1] William Cockerham, "At 93, this Journalist Still Searches for Truth," *The IRE Journal*, Summer 1984, 10.

[2] Lee Brown, *The Reluctant Reformation* (New York, 1974), 32, 53.

tial contribution to a discussion of the content and decision-making of the American press has remained largely ignored even by chroniclers of the genre. The ideas and criticisms expressed in nineteen books and in *In Fact* remain now, as when published, largely unaddressed.

What was it about Seldes' criticism that made it so unpalatable? What kind of criticism was it? And why has it been so easily ignored by the press, journalism historians, and scholars of press criticism? A reading of the newsletter *In Fact* reveals much about the nature of Seldes' approach to the American press and suggests some possible answers to these questions.

From the outset, Seldes intended his newsletter to be for the people at large and not for a smaller segment of journalists or highly educated readers. Over one-third of the circulation came from labor union members, and the newsletter was marked by a decidedly pro-labor bias. The first issue carried the motto "For the millions who want a free press," though this motto would change twice during the publication's life. In the second year of publication, announcing that *In Fact* would go from fortnightly to weekly publication, Seldes wrote, "Naturally *In Fact* is pro-labor, organized and unorganized, and prefers to see this country run by and for the benefit of the majority...."[3] It was perhaps because of his goal to reach millions (his prospectus for the publication stated thirty million) of ordinary Americans that the publication was written in a very down-to-earth tone. His language was simple yet colorful. Nor did he pull any punches. Newspapers were not inaccurate; they lied. The press did not miss stories; it suppressed them.

Like A.J. Liebling and I.F. Stone, Seldes was a true "character" in American journalism. But Liebling and Stone wrote in a higher tone and addressed themselves to a more elite audience. Seldes, in seeking to reach the population at large, did not produce copy of much literary merit. Indeed, his writing was often almost headlinese. He omitted articles, used ideosyncratic abbreviations, and seemed to lack consistent rules for identifying individuals and organizations. For example, a typical story in September of 1947 noted that a "list of U.S. corporations linked to the I.G. Farben cartel which supplied $12 million to put Nazi Party in power in 1933" was not reported by the press. "Many papers including NY *Herald* [sic] *Tribune* suppressed list." He referred to both the man and the newspaper corporation as "Hearst." A favorite phrase to describe many individuals was "native American fascist."[4]

What Seldes saw as the persistent "suppression" of news items was the main topic addressed in eleven years of *In Fact*. In the post-World War II years, his revelations of suppressed news increased noticeably. The sample read for this study included just over one-quarter of the to-

[3] *In Fact*, January 13, 1941, 3.
[4] *In Fact*, September 15, 1947, 1.

tal issues published (130 of the four-page issues, averaging eleven per year). In the sample there were an average of 3.5 articles each year on suppressed news. Prior to 1946 only three such articles appeared in a year; in the post-war years that number rose to five. In the 1947 sample, there were seven of these articles, more than any other year, and in 1948, there were six. The second most frequently addressed topic was what Seldes characterized as "lying" in the news. Here, too, the post-war period showed a greater emphasis on this topic than in prior years. The third most frequent topic was *In Fact* itself, its readers, or its editor. This, too, showed a marked increase in the post-war years.

Other recurring topics in *In Fact* were consumerism (often presented as news that the media refused to provide for fear of offending advertisers), the evils of big business (Seldes' assaults on "Hearst" and the other chains were often extensions of his general suspicion of big business), labor news (again, often presented as news that the media either lied about or suppressed), and Seldes' three great evils–fascism, reaction, and Nazism–which were forces that he saw as endangering America's future and as present in both the media and other forms of big business. Seldes also occasionally cited heroes in journalism such as the short-lived newspaper *PM* or in some instances the New York *Daily News*, the New York *Herald Tribune*, and the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*. [5] Of the three major topics of discussion in *In Fact*, it is useful to look first at its self-reflection–what Seldes had to say about himself, his newsletter, and his readers. This backdrop provides a clearer view of the context in the "suppressed" news items and the "lies" in which the press was viewed.

Seldes clearly fit into a group of liberal thinkers and theorists of his day who saw the media as powerful forces in society able to be used effectively for good or for evil. Seldes' years as a reporter, beginning in 1909 in the heart of the Muckraking era, only seemed to enhance his belief in the values with which he was raised. He described his father as "a libertarian, an idealist, a freethinker, a Deist, a Utopian, a Single Taxer, and a worshipper of Thoreau and Emerson, [who] was also a joiner of all noble causes....Gilbert [his brother] and I...remained throughout our lifetimes just what Father was, freethinkers. And, likewise, doubters and dissenters and perhaps Utopians." George Seldes saw the press as having (and failing in) a responsibility to expose wrongdoing and to promote moral values in society. Like other Progressives of the first half of the century, he viewed wrongdoing in society as reparable through the creation of an educated public opinion and public conscience. His philosophy anticipated the Social Responsibility Theory of the press articulated by the Commission on

[5] *In Fact*, September 9, 1950, 3; May 17, 1948, 1; August 19, 1946, 3; July 10, 1940, 1.

Freedom of the Press in 1947 and cited often in the pages of *In Fact*. The belief that media have an obligation to function for the benefit of the community is apparent in all of Seldes' writings as is the implication that citizens have a duty to be informed and active participants. It is from this perspective that Seldes, the press critic, viewed his field. This perspective led him to condemn the links between the press and big business that resulted in "suppressed" news and "lies." It was the corrupt "press lords," whose power was growing stronger all around Seldes, that encouraged him to seek to open the public's eyes and thereby bring about positive change. His reflection on the role of his own publication told much about what he expected of the press generally and of its readers.[6]

Seldes had an enduring belief in the power of the American people to make positive change in the world. The necessary tool for this, his newsletter's content indicated, was "truth." With a truly liberal spirit, he believed that somehow by being given the "truth," the people would act to stamp out the enemies of what Seldes understood to be true democracy. He called his critics "enemies of truth and enlightenment." He thus approached the production of *In Fact* with the zeal of a crusader. In house ads (ads in which the newsletter promoted itself), he called his readers "the Winter Soldier Brigade" and regularly sent them forth to capture more subscribers to keep the publication alive and affordable. In the ninth issue of *In Fact*, Seldes told readers: "*In Fact* knows that if it had one million subscribers it could become a great force for American democracy."[7]

In an editorial marking the switch to weekly publication, Seldes wrote that ultimately he hoped to increase circulation enough to make *In Fact* "a great free independent daily newspaper, owned and edited by its readers." He stated that he had "no intention of making a profit" but sought increased circulation in order to keep the price down (then fifty cents for fifty-two issues) and to spread the truth in its pages among a wider audience. He wrote to readers, "I have been in journalism 32 years come February. I have never been so optimistic about a free press as today. If you make a success of the weekly *In Fact* this year you will not only assure an eventual free daily newspaper, but you will challenge the entire commercial, unfair press of the nation." Yet another house ad in September of 1940 proclaimed, "Don't Follow the Headlines Into the Front Lines." It continued:

> With the press misrepresenting the news and whipping up hysteria, it's more important than ever to stick to the facts....Facts that reveal the real enemies of the American people....Facts that expose

[6] George Seldes, *Witness to a Century* (New York, 1987), 4, 8.

[7] *In Fact*, January 13, 1941, 3; March 24, 1941, 4; September 9, 1940, 1.

> the "powers" interested in sending American soldiers to foreign territory....Facts that are indispensible for calm and objective evaluation of news.

The ad then shifted into a plea for subscribers to help build greater circulation for *In Fact*. "Carry a subscription blank with you always," Seldes told readers in an editorial.[8]

It was not unusual for editorials to conclude with a pitch for *In Fact*. One asked, "Do You Want This Work to Go On?" The work of *In Fact* could only continue, it stated, with increased dollars from subscriptions. Another editorial titled "You, and European News" was typical:

> For nine years this weekly has been telling many Americans that their press does not serve them well and honestly....[T]he press is their enemy and handles and mishandles the news accordingly.
>
> You have to know what is happening in Europe. From now on our fate is tied to the fate of Europe. The days of merely sensational news stories from abroad should be over, and the American people must be told about the great currents of events–the labor movements, the tides to the Left or Right, the peace and the war currents–which are more important than much of the news which today covers the front pages of our newspapers....I hope you want this information, and that you will be interested enough to ask ten or twenty or even a hundred people to send me their subscriptions, so that I can continue to build up a news service of help to all intelligent Americans.[9]

An issue in October of 1944 was devoted to a report carrying the label "Copyright; Exclusive; Documented; Official" and telling of an anti-labor "lying campaign" in the press and radio aimed at U.S. servicemen. It was accompanied by an "Open Letter to Thousands of New Readers" which stated:

> This is a typical issue of this newsletter. The purpose of *In Fact* is to expose native fascism, the corrupt press, and other enemies of the American people....No other publication in America has so consistently exposed the big money, the financial and industrial interests, the real powers behind American fascism....The pen and the sword must unite to destroy the common enemy of all people.

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[8] *In Fact*, January 13, 1941, 3; September 23, 1940, 4; July 15, 1940, 3; Seldes explained in an interview on January 25, 1988, at his home in Hartland-4-Corners, Vt., that he never needed income from *In Fact* to live on. He had a "living trust" that supported him and his wife for years.

[9] *In Fact*, May 22, 1950, 4; February 21, 1949, 3.

> To the thousands whose first acquaintance with *In Fact* is this issue, we earnestly recommend *Facts and Fascism* by the editor of this newsweekly. It will help you catch up on four years of exposes of the real fascist movement in America which this publication is printing.[10]

This promotion of Seldes' book *Facts and Fascism* was not unusual. Ads in *In Fact* were nearly always for the newsletter itself or for its editor's books. Occasionally, *In Fact* ran ads for the books of supporters like Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes. In September of 1945 a boxed item headed "Post Office Reminder" noted the date by which packages should be mailed to soldiers overseas in order to be received by Christmas. The item added, "See list of books below" for selection as gifts to soldiers, referring to an advertisement for Seldes' books. But the books were being promoted, Seldes says today, to keep *In Fact* alive, especially during its last two years of publication.[11] The importance of that source of income increased markedly in the later years of its publication as the content and tone of the newsletter revealed a newsletter on the defensive.

In the post-war years *In Fact* began to publish frequent items defending the publication and/or its editor against charges of being a "fellow traveler" or of being "subsidized by foreign gold." Seldes had addressed such charges early in the life of *In Fact*. In September of 1940, *In Fact* published a letter labeled as sent by "the editor" of *In Fact* to the Scripps-Howard newspaper the *World-Telegram* in response to criticism of Seldes for his opposition to military conscription. Seldes had endorsed an Emergency Peace Mobilization in Chicago which was a rally of 25,000 people against conscription. The letter justified Seldes' stand, stating, "there is no evidence of an emergency therefore no necessity" for conscription. It continued:

> As a result of my endorsement you say in your paper today: "George Seldes, frequently verbal defender of Communist organizations, described as a fellow traveler."
>
> This statement is a lie and a smear.
>
> I have not defended Communist organizations verbally; I am not a fellow traveler. I am not a Communist. I am a newspaper man who believes in unions, a member of the CIO, and my chief activity for years has been exposing the corruption of the newspapers.[12]

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[10] *In Fact*, October 9, 1944, 1, 4.

[11] *In Fact*, September 24, 1945, 4; interview with George Seldes.

[12] *In Fact*, September 23, 1940, 2.

In November of 1943, under the newletter's new motto "An Antidote for Falsehood in the Daily Press," another signed editorial restated the publication's goals and the credentials of its editor:

> Only four or five times in the 160 issues of *In Fact* have its readers found editorial comment instead of the news exposing American as well as foreign fascism, the corrupt newspapers, labor-baiters, anti-Semites, and the great and powerful forces of money and greed which are behind our small-time fascists.... [Fascism is] grounded in the National Association of Manufacturers and the newspapers they control, and radio speakers they hire to poison the air, and the magazines, the powerful syndicates which send out anti-labor propaganda, their radio spokesmen and their prostitute journalists.... The male harlots of the kept press and the radio,...are now conducting a campaign of slander and falsehood against this weekly.... My field is the corrupt press and I wrote all the items on this subject. My objective was the Euripidean ideal, "to let the facts speak for themselves," without interpretation, and from the day I became sole editor this weekly has published nothing but substantiated facts;... It has never published a lie. It has defended labor, it has exposed Nazi propaganda, while the publications which now attack *In Fact* have done the opposite .... To fight fascism I was then [during the Spanish Civil War] and am now willing to join with any men, group, movement, or nation .... I am not a member of the Communist Party, nor of the communist movement, nor of any organization which I am aware is communist, nor what the smearers and liars call "fellow travelers" in order to avoid a libel suit.
>
> I am, however, an anti-Fascist. I have always been one....
>
> One war at a time, gentlemen. If we are not in uniform we must fight the fascists at home. To achieve this end, and to let the facts speak for themselves, has always been and still is the purpose of this weekly and its editor.[13]

But in the post-war years, in the cold–war climate, Seldes was more frequently moved to use *In Fact* for self-defense. In August of 1946, *In Fact* chronicled an incident that revealed much about the changing nature of the times and what might be called Seldes' naivete. Seldes wrote: "Although the American press has maintained a conspiracy of silence about this newsletter, it editor and his books–295 out of 300 big papers actually refusing to review certain books–it could not suppress one of the most sensational incidents of the present peace conference in Paris." The conference between Secretary of State James F. Byrnes and

[13] *In Fact*, November 8, 1943, 1-4.

V.M. Molotov of the Soviet Union was marked by an exchange between the two concerning the nature of freedom of the press in the two nations. *In Fact* reported that Molotov said the U.S. press might be free but it

> is neither fair nor honest; it is in the hands of "trusts," and it is run by "bosses." Mr. Molotov based his reply, according to the Associated Press and United Press texts, on a book by George Seldes. The AP and UP translated the name of the book and of course got it wrong. They made no effort in New York to spend five cents for a phone call to get the facts straight. Also the words "trusts" and "bosses" are poor translations from the Russian. The actual terms should have been "press chains" and "press lords," or "lords of the press."[14]

In the next week's issue in an "Editor's Column" Seldes pursued the matter further:

> From the first day *In Fact* was published there has been a conspiracy of silence against it, myself and my books....This conspiracy was broken on August 6 at the peace conference in Paris....Readers might think that in view of the great publicity occasioned by the Byrnes-Molotov debate that a million or even ten thousand persons rushed in subscriptions to *In Fact* or bought *Lords of the Press* [the book referred to by Molotov]. I regret to state that nothing happened. We spent a lot of money for advertising, but it didn't work .... I have to ask our readers to double their efforts. I would prefer 300,000 subscribers at $1 to 150,000 subscribers at $2. I believe my weekly is a tremendous force against fascism, against labor-baiters, against the corrupt press, and for the welfare of the majority of Americans....It is later than you think. The forces of fascism are organizing in America, apparently their last great stronghold. In self-defense you must get into this fight against native fascism.[15]

On the next page, in an article headlined "Press Attacks Editor," Seldes noted that papers all over the nation including the New York *Times* and *Herald-Tribune* "attacked the editor of this weekly" following Molotov's comment. He noted that the *Times* refused to publish his letter of reply to the critical editorial, and published the letter himself: "I write this protest in the hope that you will print it, although I have been informed by members of your staff that there is a boycott in *The Times* against me, my books and my newsletter *In Fact*. Your advertising censor, in refusing advertising for my newsletter and

[14] *In Fact*, August 19, 1946, 2.
[15] *In Fact*, August 26, 1946, 1.

the book from which Mr. Molotov quoted, admitted this conspiracy of silence."[16]

As the grip of cold war tightened over the United States following President Truman's pronouncement of his policy of containment of communism in 1947, *In Fact*'s criticisms became increasingly unwelcome. In 1948 an item headlined "Time Challenged" responded to *Time* magazine's characterization of Seldes as a "'leftist pressbaiter'" and of his book 1000 Americans as "'a collection of truths, half truths and untruths about the U.S. press and industry.'" Seldes wrote, "This is a typical *Time* falsehood, a typical *Time* trick. It does not review a book; it smears. I challenge you to point out errors....I denounce your statement charging half truths and untruths....I furthermore denounce your... listing me as a "'pressbaiter.'"[17]

In the last years of the newsletter's life, circulation dropped from the high of 176,000 to 56,000. In retrospect, Seldes blamed this on a "nationwide campaign of newspapers, columnists, magazines, and radio against the newsletter, accusing it of following the Communist line or the Stalinist line....Eventually this campaign ironically enough aided by a Communist Party boycott, killed the newsletter."[18] Seldes communicated this concern in several pleas to readers in the last years of publication. In July of 1949 a page-one item headlined "To All Readers" stated:

> Much has happened and many things have changed since May 1940 when the first issue of *In Fact* was published, as we all realize .... [Because *In Fact*] has not hesitated to expose the powerful and the mighty, in Congress, in the press, in big business, in advertising, among the columnists, book writers, the reactionaries, the native fascists and the fakirs, it has earned for itself more enemies than any other publication in the United States .... We can say that the reactionaries cannot deny what *In Fact* has said, so they smear ....
>
> In the present atmosphere of hysteria and witchhunting the reactionaries have...pretty well established thought control in America through the agency of fear .... Your obligation is to keep *In Fact* free and independent as it has always been, a voice against the present campaign of smears, character assassination, liberal-baiting, and the spread of falsehood in which congressmen, the yellow press and all the reactionaries of the nation are united. Don't just sit still and deplore the situation. One of the things you can do is help get that larger circulation.[19]

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[16]Ibid., George Seldes, *Never Tire of Protesting* (New York, 1968), 27.
[17]*In Fact*, May 17, 1948, 2.
[18]*Never Tire of Protesting*, 53, 55, 57.
[19]*In Fact*, July 11, 1949, 1-3.

Two issues later the newsletter noted that "it is the failure of those on the side of democracy to support the voices of democracy which gives the reactionary weeklies and dailies the main voice in American affairs." Those voices of democracy referred to were *In Fact* itself and the recently discontinued *PM*. Seldes bemoaned the inability of such publications to awaken an active readership among the nation's liberals. But, during the Cold War, Seldes was really addressing an almost paralyzed population. At the start of what was to be *In Fact*'s last year, Seldes wrote that his newsletter was

> the only publication in America which notes the propaganda, bias, fakery and falsehood in the vast majority of newspapers. Therefore, if you know anyone who reads a newspaper, you should also get them to read *In Fact*. Our only means of getting new readers is through readers, and we hope that in 1950 you will raise our circulation to the 100,000 mark again.

But that was not to happen; *In Fact* appeared only thirty-eight more times.[20]

The first page of the last issue of *In Fact* was headed in all caps across the full page: "EDITORIAL: TO ALL OUR FAITHFUL SUBSCRIBERS." It was Seldes' letter of explanation for the death of his newsletter. He wrote:

> *In Fact* is forced to announce it is suspending publication temporarily.
>
> I think this is a tragic event. Not for us on *In Fact*, but for the American people. We were the only publication in this country devoted to printing the important news the commercial press suppressed, distorted, faked or buried. We were the only publication in the country exposing reaction–which is the first step before fascism.

He blamed apathy for his inability to increase circulation:

> In 1940 when *In Fact* started, and again now in 1950, there is not only apathy but there is downright defeatism on the Left, the liberal, intellectual, democratic and anti-fascist minority in the United States. The witchhunt of 1950 is a hundred times worse than that of the 1920s....

[20] *In Fact*, July 18, 1949, 1; January 9, 1950, 3.

> There is no protest, no indignation. Or very little. People are frightened to death....Everyone who is anti-fascist today is branded a communist, and since the nation is at war with communism, the word "traitor" is also being used....
>
> I expected to be libeled, smeared, redbaited, and this expectation was fulfilled....*In Fact* has made more enemies than any other publication in America.

The remainder of the last issue was devoted to a retrospective of *In Fact*'s exposes and accomplishments over eleven years. In the last two paragraphs under the subhead "We Fought A Good Fight," Seldes stated,

> I have always felt that we were together in this fight against reaction, and I was not helping you nor were you helping me, but you and I were together in this desperate battle against the real enemies of America .... I do not feel defeated and I am sure that you too will never give up in this conflict with your real enemies, the enemies of all the American people, including the apathetic majority.[21]

Those "real" enemies were identified regularly in *In Fact* as those who would keep the truth from the public. The newsletter captured that spirit best when, in 1943, Seldes changed the slogan that appeared weekly on page one. From the first issue in 1940 until May 3, 1943, the slogan had been "For the Millions Who Want a Free Press." Then, for nearly six months, the slogan was "Exposes Native Fascism, Corrupt Press, Labor-baiters." Finally, the slogan changed to "An Antidote for Falsehood in the Daily Press." This was fitting because, indeed, the content most frequently addressed factual sins of omission and commission in the press. Suppressed news and lying in the press were the most prevalent themes in *In Fact* with the two often intertwined. For Seldes, the newsletter's content was the only way to counteract those poisons. Generally Seldes saw the press as deliberately suppressing and lying about news in order to protect big business of which it was a part and on whose advertising revenue it was dependent.

In 1945 Seldes wrote,"The people of America have long been aware that some of the great daily newspapers of the land, either advertently or inadvertently, have been distoring [sic], coloring, and otherwise suppressing or falsifying the news by one means or another." In another issue he wrote matter-of-factly that "many hundred news items"

[21]*In Fact*, October 2, 1950, 1-3.

had been "suppressed within the past week or so by the majority of the 1900 daily newspapers of America." But he added that suppression was less prevalent than in the past, given that the press had learned to "bury and distort instead. In this way they come out way ahead: no one can accuse them of suppressing news, and by adding coloration, bias, distortion and propaganda to the news, they put over their own policy: the policy of the paymasters, the advertisers, National Association of Manufacturers, the Big Business system which styles itself 'Free Enerprise.'"[22]

During National Newspaper Week in 1943, Seldes devoted an entire issue to the week's "suppressed news," noting the irony of the situation. Similarly, in 1947 a boxed item headlined "Prayers Don't Help," cited a United Lutheran Church call for a "pray for the press week" so that journalists "may discharge their trust in the interests of godliness and good order." Wrote Seldes, "Evidently the parishioners didn't pray loudly enough, or else reporters and editors are above redemption. A survey of newspapers in the two weeks following the prayers showed no change from the ordinary bias, distortions, fabrications, suppressions."[23]

General press cooperation with government establishment was regularly addressed. For example, during the Korean War, Seldes noted, "There is always reaction in time of war, and opportunistic politicians, hiding behind the sensational headlines of war news, pass corrupt and vicious laws, and the press plays its part by underplaying and suppressing this news." Citing a general climate of "war propaganda" in 1949, Seldes accused "the nation's newspapers" of suppressing a senator's "scathing denunciation in Congress of the propaganda campaign for war waged by the U.S. press, culminating in the charge that hysteria has been whipped up to the point where even senators are afraid to oppose present foreign policy because they would be accused of treason..." Noting the difficulty of getting minority political views into the U.S. press, Seldes lauded the decision of the Denver *Post* to syndicate socialist leader Norman Thomas twice weekly. But he criticized the paper's statement to readers that it was doing so to offer all sides of American thinking while simultaneously reassuring readers that Thomas would not "crusade for socialism." Seldes wrote, "According to the yardstick for a truly free press laid down by the Commission on Freedom of the Press, Thomas should have been able, if he wished, to write for and about socialism. The restriction...on his writings makes it apparent that the new column will add little in the way of new ideas to the so-called marketplace."[24]

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[22]*In Fact*, January 29, 1945, 3; June 21, 1943, 1.

[23]*In Fact*, October 11, 1943, 1-4; February 17, 1947, 1.

[24]*In Fact*, August 21, 1950, 1; March 28, 1949, 1-2.

Most frequently, *In Fact* detailed suppression of news that might harm what it called the "three sacred cows of press and radio"–the tobacco, automobile, and drug industries which Seldes said were the nation's largest advertisers. He regularly described the refusal of the press to publicize studies from Johns Hopkins University that "prove beyond question that there is a relationship between the use of tobacco and the shortening of life." There "is not a newspaper or magazine in America (outside scientific journals) which has published all the facts." In another instance, Seldes reported, "The venality and corruption of the press is further illustrated when there are labor troubles, strikes, frame-ups at the big tobacco plants. When the R.J. Reynolds Co. is mentioned the newspapers suppress the story entirely; they know who pays for the Camel ads."[25]

Similarly, he accused the press of bowing to the interest of the liquor industry in exchange for ad revenues. He named over 200 papers and the Associated Press as having gone "wet because the wets paid them via advertisements." Though *In Fact* "holds no brief for Prohibition" its "point is that the press follows its own selfish motives in whatever it does....The welfare of the people when it comes into conflict with the welfare of the business office, comes off a bad last." In another issue, *In Fact* claimed, "One of the most amazing stories of the corruption of the American press...is the story of the fight the liquor interests waged against the prohibition amendment, the support the newspapers gave them because of the advertising money, and the repeal fight which was won by the DuPonts, the distillers and the press."[26]

Overall, *In Fact* characterized the American press as deliberately suppressing news on the actions of the Federal Trade Commission that were in the best interests of the public but not of the advertisers. Under the heading "Suppressed as Usual," Seldes reported on an FTC action against an insecticide spray. He concluded, "All this news [of FTC actions], every item known by every editor, publisher and reporter to be a challenge to the honesty of the press, is suppressed 365 days in the year by at least 1740 of the U.S. 1749 papers." Another item stated, "The 'free' American press is the main instrument by which manufacturers of harmful drugs poison millions of people." Still another headed "Everybody Suppresses" declared, "Everyone in the newspaper business knows that the daily fraud orders of the Federal Trade Commission are a daily challenge to the integrity of the press–and prove its corruption daily." This was followed by a list of excerpts from these orders. In still another instance, after revealing FTC action against the beauty cream industry and the failure of the press to report it, he summed up as

[25] *In Fact*, February 2, 1948, 1; January 13, 1941, 1; January 1, 1945, 3.
[26] *In Fact*, November 2, 1942, 3-4; June 29, 1942, 3.

follows: "One percent of the press prints the news, one percent buries it, 98 percent suppresses it because it means loss of ads."[27]

Such criticism was consistent with *In Fact*'s ongoing argument that the press was aligned with big business for its own self-interest. Seldes wrote in 1946 of the "greatest 'conspiracy of silence' in American history, the silence on the part of the press regarding the most powerful, and at times, one of the most corrupt, force [sic] in the nation," the National Association of Manufacturers. He called it "the most powerful lobby in Washington today" and said it:

> controls a lot of legislation, still controls the press, and has the public "over a barrel."...About 98 percent of the U.S. press...makes money from NAM members' advertising, cooperates with the NAM, is influenced by NAM advertising...and runs its editorial policy to suit the NAM, whose 15,000 members represent the big business interests of the nation.

He accused the press of "suppressing" the news of 1947's unprecedented corporate profits, stating that

> the American press, which serves the coporations (spearheaded by the National Association of Manufacturers and U.S. Chamber of Commerce) rather than the general welfare (as confirmed by the Commission on Freedom of the Press) has been able to deceive the American people on a matter which affects their pocketbook, their health, their standard of living.[28]

In Fact also detailed the extent to which the press itself was increasingly a big business. In an item titled "Power of the Press," the "strong arm of the nation's press lords" was blamed for an indefinite postponement of the "first formal investigation of newspaper monopoly in U.S. history." The postponement was the result of Republican senators and "big chains and powerful press lords' efforts "to prevent disclosure of news which the major papers and wire services have suppressed for several months." The article cited a report by a congressional committee that the large metropolitan dailies were monopolizing newsprint supplies during a time of scarcity and that the growth of chain ownership and the decreasing number of cities with competing daily newspapers were "'a matter of concern.'" It was the press' identification of itself as a business that also led it to "distort" and "suppress" the report of the Commission on Freedom of the Press, Seldes wrote. He saw the report as "confirming the charges of corruption, sup-

[27] *In Fact*, January 6, 1947, 1; October 8, 1945, 2; December 2, 1946, 1; September 9, 1940, 4.
[28] *In Fact*, May 27, 1946, 1' December 1, 1947, 2.

pression, falsehood, and venality made in these colums since 1940." He reported that Commission Chairman Robert Hutchins told a gathering of editorial writers that "'some of the editorial writers read the commission's report incorrectly, some treated it unfairly, some used untruthful headlines and some just plain lied about it.'" Added Seldes, "Most papers, incidentally, didn't print this AP report" of Hutchins' speech.[29]

Much of Seldes' concern over the lying and suppression that he found in the press reflected his belief in the power of public opinion, propaganda, facts, and truth. He offered a recurrent column called "Nail That Lie Dept." which presented the contrast between falsely reported items and the "facts." The "nailing of lies" in the press was a true mission of the newsletter because of the power Seldes attributed to public opinion. He saw lies as geared toward manipulating that opinion, especially on the subjects of war, labor, and communism. For example, in an article in 1941 he wrote of a single issue of the New York *Times*, "the foremost newspaper in America," that it contained "sensational headlines, overplayed items, underplayed items, and an editorial policy" typical of "the sort of journalism which rules America; this is the sort of journalism which makes war, peace, neutrality, hysteria, labor-baiting, red-baiting, etc., etc. It manufactures public opinion." Some months later, he noted that Americans had been misled about the Soviet Union for years: "...when the history of this epoch is finally written, the record of the press in regard to Russia ever since 1917 will rank as the most scandalous campaign of sustained lying the world has ever known."[30]

Seldes also accused the press of participating in a campaign of lying about the various probes of alleged communist subversion in the nation. He wrote that the inquiry into the film industry that it was marked by testimony taken "chiefly from stoolpigeons, thugs, perverts and liars...refusing everyone smeared the American right of rebuttal." He said it "produced reports which are 99 percent falsehood, hearsay and smears (although the press published them as news)." He said the contention that Hollywood was engaged in a "plot to overthrow the U.S. Govt [sic] is nothing more than a Hearst story, and one of the biggest of the many falsehoods Mr. Hearst has published." In another issue he stated that all of the various committees inquiring into "un-American" activity "have stated their purpose has been to use publicity as their weapon. Most of the press has lent itself to this purpose" and refused space to those seeking to deny or rebut charges made against them.[31]

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[29]*In Fact*, January 20, 1947, 1; December 6, 1948, 2.

[30]*In Fact*, January 9, 1950, 2; May 5, 1941, 1; December 29, 1941, 1.

[31]*In Fact*, September 22, 1941, 1; July 30, 1945, 1; December 6, 1948, 2.

Often "lies nailed" by *In Fact* concerned labor and what Seldes described as attempts to characterize labor as unsupportive of the war effort: "Numerous newspapers which have aided the Nazi axis by publishing lies against American labor, and the Associated Press, world's biggest news service...spread the most vicious lie of 1943 on Jan. 22. It was a fake story alleging that seamen refused to unload ships at Guadalcanal on a Sunday." Often Seldes exposed similar "fake" stories that depicted labor as striking or refusing to work contrary to the interests of a nation at war. He targeted some publications specifically: "Every issue of *Reader's Digest* includes one or more items which can be classified under bias or falsehood. Almost every issue includes an attack on labor." In another instance, he criticized the press for "faking the news" about U.S. laborers who worked on July 4, 1945. In reality, Seldes wrote, "This magnificent fact knocks out every lie against labor told the past four years by 99 percent of the U.S. press, by all the reactionary columnists of the [Westbrook] Pegler type, all the radio liars, all the plain and fancy liars who poison the information of the American people."[32]

In the end, of course, *In Fact* really wasn't an antidote to the poison it detected. When Seldes ceased publication, in 1959, the newsletter had lost two-thirds of its circulation and was being overwhelmed by "the almost universal flood of red charges against us." His writings were often dismissed as those of a "fellow traveler," some subscribers reported being harassed by the postal service for merely receiving *In Fact*, and the not uncommon paranoia that marked the domestic Cold War took its toll. Seldes gave up, he says today, not because of any financial considerations or because of the work itself; he gave up because "it was no use" continuing to pursue his initial goal: "since it had been my announced purpose to publish a newsletter 'for the millions who want a free press,' and there was no longer a chance of reaching a large public, publication was suspended...." He concluded that "the five buck liberal in America, the liberal who had five bucks to spend, is limited to 30,000" people and they all subscribe to several existing liberal publications. "If I'm going to reach these same people I don't see any use in publication," he said in 1988.[33]

But those who interview Seldes today at age 99 find a man no less spirited and committed than the one who optimistically began *In Fact* almost fifty years ago. He still collects folders full of suppressed news items and still argues vigorously that the press too often fails in its societal mission because of its selfish commitment to advertising revenues and its refusal to be responsive to its critics. He wrote in his latest book,

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[32]*In Fact*, February 1, 1943, 1; January 27, 1947, 1; July 30, 1945, 1.

[33]*Never Tire*, 57; interview with George Seldes; it should be noted that Seldes was actually "cleared" of charges of communist affiliation by Sen. Joseph McCarthy in 1953.

Witness to a Century, that "the press itself, is probably the sacred cow that will outlive all others." Seldes has his own theory as to why he has suddenly been "rediscovered" by the media:

> From that day I reached my ninetieth birthday, the American press, which had for almost fifty years maintained a "non-conspiracy" of silence about me and my work, suddenly seemed to forgive and forget, and again treated me as a living human being....
>
> I cannot explain this change of heart except to say: if you can make it to the magical age of ninety, all your sins are forgiven.[34]

More seriously, Seldes attributes the neglect of his work by journalists and scholars to the simple fact that its message was one no one wanted to hear. Holding old issues of his newsletter, he points to the slogan "For the Millions Who Want a Free Press" and says, "This is the reason. Because this says plainly that the press is not free." He points to the final slogan, "An Antidote for Falsehood in the Press," and says, "This is an attack on the press. I say that there are daily falsehoods in the press. And then I prove it every week with a certain number of daily falsehoods."[35]

But there are other reasons for failing to respond to Seldes' criticisms. At base, his criticisms were and are an assault on the very foundation of the press in the United States. The vast majority of *In Fact*'s suppressed news stories were sent to Seldes by reporters who could not get them published in their own papers. Seldes would publish them without identifying the reporters and jeapordizing their jobs. Those reporters recognized that Seldes functioned outside of the restraints that existed in their own newsrooms. He was free to attack the financial nexus between the press and big business because he did not have to rely on advertising (or circulation) dollars for his subsistence. He brought to his press criticism his utopian philosophy and a free thinking nature. The result was unbridled passion that was reflected in the language with which he indicted the press and the goals to which he believed newspapers ought to aspire. His kind of criticism was neither practical nor compromising. How can one compromise with "fascism"? How can one justify "lies" in the newspaper? If such charges are given serious consideration, however, then they also would have to be acted on. That possibility is a highly problematic one. Perhaps Seldes' goals required changes far too sweeping even to be considered. Perhaps his tone and colorful language caused him to seem too much the character and too little the serious critic. *In Fact* may also have been a victim of bad timing. Cold-War America did not offer a climate conducive to the consid-

[34] *Witness*, 463, 474.

[35] Interview with George Seldes.

eration of any radical ideas. The assaults on the newsletter and its editor were not inconsistent with the reaction any dissident voices of the day garnered. As the temperature of the Cold War dropped, so too did *In Fact*'s once strong circulation. Seldes' criticisms would have been unwelcome at any time, but at such a time they never really had a chance.

"Purse and Pen": Party-Press Relationships, 1789-1816

Wm. David Sloan*

In calculating how Republicans in the 1790s could gain national power, Thomas Jefferson believed the most serious obstacle was the Federalists' support from the majority of newspapers. Thus, even after he had become the recognized leader of the opposition party, he put more emphasis on newspapers than on party organization. His declaration to James Madison in 1799 vividly illustrated his attitude. To support the press, he wrote, "[e]very man must lay his purse & his pen under contribution."[1]

Following the Republican triumph in the 1800 presidential election, members of the party continued to encourage the establishment and support of papers. Massachusetts Congressman Barnabas Bidwell, urging Vice President Aaron Burr to consider founding a national party paper, reasoned that in making political decisions the public "must judge from impressions, communicated thro News-papers principally," that people therefore needed to be given "true explanations" of issues, and that "[f]or this purpose there ought to be one authentic paper."[2] Samuel Harrison Smith's *National Intelligencer*, publishing under the patronage of Jefferson, soon fulfilled that role.

Federalists generally were disdainful of the opinion of the masses; but in America, a nation in which public opinion was "sovereign" and political parties fought to influence it, some Federalists realized that their party was forced to encourage a favorable press.[3] Alexander Hamilton, the Federalists' national leader, had shown his perception of the need of newspaper support even earlier than had Jefferson. In 1789 he had assisted in the establishment of the *Gazette of the United*

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[1]To Madison, Feb. 5, 1799, Paul Leicester Ford, ed., *The Works of Thomas Jefferson* (New York, 1892-1899) VIII, 344.

[2]July 6, 1801, Gratz Collection, Hist. Soc. of Pa., in Noble E. Cunningham, Jr., *The Jeffersonian Republicans in Power: Party Operations, 1801-1809* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1963), 259.

[3]Fisher Ames to Timothy Pickering, March 12, 1799, Seth Ames, ed., *The Works of Fisher Ames* (New York, 1969 [reprint]), Vol. I, 254.

States. After the Federalist defeat in the 1800 election, he initiated the plan for the founding of another national organ, the New York *Evening Post*. Throughout his career he supported these and other papers not only by financial assistance but by literary contributions as well. Fisher Ames was another Federalist who recognized the importance of the press. He believed that if France's nobles had used the press to argue their side, the worst of the French revolution would have been averted. Federalists, he argued, should not make the same mistake.[4]

In the United States' first party system of the 1790s to 1816, Republicans and Federalists looked upon the press as a most important instrument for appealing to the public. They believed in the value of partisan newspapers and thought they needed editors who could ably support their views. To obtain the support, national and local leaders established papers, aided them, or in some way allied themselves with the press.

This study looks at the specific nature of the relationship between newspapers and America's first political parties. The relationship was more complex than many historians have assumed. The general picture they have given is one in which parties and politicians controlled editors by providing or withholding financial rewards. In this picture, editors are shown as sycophants of politicians and as motivated primarily by money.[5] Such a description of the party press seems to rest in historians' views that the press should be independent of parties and politicians and that the primary factor influencing people's actions is material gain. The first attitude is based on the approach journalism historians have used in applying journalistic values of their own times to the historical past. That error is known as "present-mindedness." The second appears rather superficial, for it is rare that any single, monolithic motivation accounts for people's actions. The economic explanation, however, has been popular with journalism historians writing in the twentieth century. This century has been one in which materialistic motivation seems to have become widespread in the United States; and historians have, it appears, tended to assume that economics played as key a role in motivating earlier Americans as it has in the historians' own time. Along with the description of the nature of

[4]To Christopher Gore, Dec. 14, 1802, ibid., 312.

[5]The critique historians have offered is not a sophisticated economic one emphasizing the material nature of society or the journalists' long-term self-interest. Neither is it a Marxist critique, since Marxist historians have done little on the American press and virtually nothing on the party press. Typical of the monetary explanation of party editors are such works as Mary Lindsay Thornton, "Public Printing in North Carolina, 1749-1815," *North Carolina Historical Review*, 21 (July 1944), 181-202; Carl E. Prince, "The Federalist Party and the Creation of a Court Press, 1789-1801," *Journalism Quarterly*, 53 (1976): 238-241; and Culver G. Smith, *The Press, Politics, and Patronage: The American Government's Use of Newspapers, 1789-1875* (Athens, Ga., 1977). Along with such works, there also are many that focus on other aspects of the party press. Economics has not been the sole interest of historians.

party-press relations, one of the fundamental findings of this present study is that financial reward, while an aspect of the relationship, was secondary.

Historiographically, this study fits into that body of works which recently has explained the party press as central to America's early political system. Typifying that approach have been the studies by Sloan, who has focused on the Federalist-Republican period, and Baldasty, who has concentrated on the Jacksonian period.[6] They have argued that historians, rather than evaluating the party press by journalistic standards of our own time, need to consider the press within the context of its own time and setting.

The nature of the relationship between parties and newspapers was essentially this. Politicians and editors believed that newspapers were critical in the political system. Politicians therefore supported newspapers, and editors worked closely with them and often as leaders in the party organization. The support editors received often was meager or insufficient, yet they continued to support their party's cause, for it was more important to them than financial reward.

Under urging from such leaders as Jefferson and Hamilton, Republicans and Federalists became actively involved in the support of a party press. Federalists were especially successful during the years in which George Washington and John Adams occupied the presidency. A party owning the administration had a distinct advantage in the government patronage it could dole out to editors. The early papers also were published chiefly in the seaports and commercial towns where Federalists were more numerous and where most potential advertisers were businessmen with Federalist inclinations.[7] The Federalists thus achieved a decided advantage in the numbers of newspapers. In some locales, their papers outnumbered those of the Republicans by margins of five to one.[8] As 1800 neared, with increased efforts by Republicans to strengthen their party organization and newspaper support, Federalists recognized a serious need to add to their newspaper numbers. While Federalists believed they also enjoyed the advantage of correct philosophy, Ames feared Republican newspapers could circulate lies so assiduously that "they will beat us."[9] Even as late as 1804, however, their nemesis, Thomas Jefferson, believed that Federalists controlled three-quarters of the country's newspapers.[10] Whether or not the Pres-

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[6]See, for example, Wm. David Sloan, "The Early Party Press: The Newspaper Role in American Politics, 1788-1812," *Journalism History*, 9 (1982), 18-24; and Gerald J. Baldasty, "The Press and Politics in the Age of Jackson," *Journalism Monographs*, 89 (August 1984).

[7]Frank Luther Mott, *Jefferson and the Press* (Baton Rouge, 1943), 51-52.

[8]Jerry Knudson, "The Jefferson Years: Response by the Press" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 1974), 56.

[9]Boston *Gazette*, April 1799, in S. Ames, II, 116.

[10]To William Short, Jan. 23, 1804, in James E. Pollard, *The Presidents and the Press* (New York, 1947),

ident exaggerated, it is clear that the opposition party's percentage of papers was greater proportionately than its support among the populace. A Republican broadside circulated in 1808 estimated that Federalist papers outnumbered Republican papers two-to-one.[11] Although the number of papers backing the Federalists remained large for several years, by 1816 the party's efforts at maintaining a press flagged. The fact that Federalism was on the wane discouraged the founding and support of papers. By the end of the period, Federalists neither dispensed patronage nor subsidized party papers.[12] Journalistically, this time was surely the "twilight of Federalism."

As newspaper support declined with enthusiasm for Federalism, so Republican newspapers increased with the fortunes of the Republican party. By 1798 virtually every state had at least one pro-Republican paper, but few of the papers had more than local prominence. The campaign of 1800 gave the first strong impetus to the founding of Republican papers. Everywhere Jefferson and other leaders encouraged the establishment and support of papers.[13] By the summer of the campaign, reported a Federalist senator, opposition papers were springing up "in almost every town and county in the country."[14] Boston's leading Federalist paper, the *Columbian Centinel*, complained that the opposition was establishing papers "from Portsmouth in New Hampshire to Savannah in Georgia."[15]

Republican encouragement of a large and vigorous press intensified with Jefferson's triumph. Although Republicans recognized a great victory in the election, they did not believe naively that the battle was over. Convinced of the influence of the press, they continued efforts to build up their support among it. In July after Jefferson had assumed the presidency, Attorney General Levi Lincoln wrote him from Worcester:

> If Massachusetts gets right, all will be right. The other eastern states will be with her. A few more republican newspapers, and the thing is accomplished. Exertions are making to obtain them. Editors alone are wanting; sufficient encouragement would be given them.[16]

Republicans' increased power to dispense patronage because the presi-

75.

[11]In Cunningham (1963), 245.

[12]Shaw Livermore, Jr., *The Twilight of Federalism: The Disintegration of the Federalist Party 1815-1830* (Princeton, N.J., 1962), 29.

[13]John C. Miller, *Crisis in Freedom: The Alien and Sedition Acts* (Boston, 1951), 29; Claude G. Bowers, *Jefferson and Hamilton: The Struggle for Democracy in America* (Boston, 1925), 445 and 484.

[14]Uriah Tracy to Oliver Wolcott, Aug. 7, 1800, in Bowers, *ibid.*, 484.

[15]In Bowers, *ibid.*, 455.

[16]July 28, 1801, Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress.

dent was a Republican aided the multiplication of Republican papers.[17] The proportion of Republican to Federalist papers especially improved in the newly settled areas in the west – along the western borders of New York and Pennsylvania and in Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee – because Republican politics were more favorable toward development of those areas than were Federalist policies.[18] During Jefferson's first term, during which the issues of the Louisiana Purchase and the repeal of the Federalist judiciary act created intense partisan division, Republican papers gained maturity as a well-disciplined political force.[19]

By 1808 Republicans finally had gained the upper hand in newspaper numbers, although their majority rested on the support of weeklies rather than dailies. The majority of the latter supported the Federalists. Of 273 pro-party papers, 142 supported the Republicans, while 131 supported the Federalists. Of pro-Republican papers, 114 were weeklies, 11 were semi-weeklies, 9 were tri-weeklies, and 8 were dailies. On the Federalist side, 97 were weeklies, 15 semi-weeklies, 5 tri-weeklies, and 14 dailies.[20] Thus, although more papers backed the Republican party, the newspapers supporting the Federalist party actually printed slightly more total issues per week. In some regions, the picture appeared even bleaker for Republicans. In Maine, a Republican paper was not established until 1803, although eleven Federalist papers had appeared. Only two of the Federalist papers established before that year, however, survived until 1803. Thus, Republican papers in Maine which had been soundly overmatched by Federalist journals in the early party period were able to equal them in number for the elections of 1808, 1812, and 1816.[21]

Editors who supported a party expected the party to aid them. Newspaper publishing was not a lucrative business. Advertising often was sparse; subscription payments frequently were delinquent. Without official favor, many newspapers would have perished. "Subsisting by a country news-paper," the editor of the Trenton (N.J.) *True American* wrote in 1802, "is generally little better than starving."[22] James Lyon, when planning to establish *The Friend of Liberty* in Richmond, Virginia, in 1800, urged "the friends of both [liberty and virtue] – among the republicans of New Hampshire – of Georgia, and of the intermediate states, to aid in the circulation and support of this paper,

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[17]Clarence S. Brigham, *Journals and Journeymen: A Contribution to the History of Early American Newspapers* (Philadelphia, 1950), 62.

[18]Mott, 52.

[19]Knudson, 337.

[20]Cunningham (1963), 237.

[21]These figures on numbers of newspapers are calculated from Frederick Gardiner Fassett, Jr., *A History of Newspapers in the District of Maine 1785-1820* (Orono, Me., 1932), 196.

[22]Trenton (N.J.) *True American*, July 26, 1802.

which is devoted to their service."[23] John Israel, seeking support for his newly established *Herald of Liberty* in Washington, Pennsylvania, wrote Congressman Albert Gallatin in 1798:

> Without the support of literary talents a periodical publication must of necessity sink into insignificance and disrepute. Therefore to you Sir, do I look for that Support, which is in your power to give and which will at the same time be instrumental and beneficial. The most base and villainous opposition have I borne....[M]y reputation has been wantonly attacked – all my interests attempted to be ruined – but solus have I been forced to repel these attacks – and stand firm to the post. Now that my friends and the friends of the principles we have professed have returned I look up to them for their friendly aid – not doubting that I shall receive it.[24]

James Callender, fleeing Federalist prosecution in 1798 and not getting aid from Jefferson as quickly as he thought he should, suggested that the Vice President was derelict in his duties. "In Europe," Callender told him, "it is understood, that if a political party does not support their assistant writer, they at least do not crush him."[25]

Politicians agreed: newspapers needed and deserved aid. Such was true even in the notorious case of Jefferson and the slanderous Callender. When later criticized for aiding Callender, Jefferson defensively protested that his contributions were mere charities. They "were no more meant as encouragements to his scurrilities," he explained, "than those I give to the beggar at my door are meant as rewards for the vices of his life."[26] Jefferson had a habit of trying to put on the best public face he could, and his protestation rings hollow. Earlier he had written that Callender's work could not "fail to produce the best effect."[27] He confidentially had declared to James Monroe that it was "essentially just and necessary" that Callender should be aided.[28]

The support given to papers fell into about a dozen categories. The most obvious in terms of real aid were loans and cash contributions. William Duane,[29] John Fenno,[30] and Noah Webster[31] were among the

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[23]New London *Bee*, Feb. 5, 1800.

[24]Sept. 23, 1798, Gallatin Papers, box 4, N.Y. Hist. Soc.

[25]Oct. 26, 1798, Jefferson Papers, CIV, 17873, Library of Congress.

[26]To James Monroe, July 15, 1802, P. Ford, VIII, 165-166; to Mrs. John Adams, July 22, 1804, *ibid.*, 309.

[27]To James Callender, Oct. 6, 1799, *ibid.*, VII, 395

[28]To Monroe, May 26, 1800, *ibid.*, 44.

[29]Jefferson to William Wirt, March 30, 1811, *ibid*, IX, 316-317; Duane to Tench Coxe, Oct. 5, 1798, in Peter J. Parker, "The Revival of the Aurora: A Letter to Tench Coxe," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, XCVI (1972), 524-525.

[30]Hamilton to Rufus King, Nov. 11, 1793, in C. Smith, 14.

[31]Allan Nevins, *The Evening Post: A Century of Journalism* (New York, 1922), 13-14.

recipients of loans. Some loans, such as those to Fenno, were dismissed without repayment, while others were expected from the first to be repaid.[32] Callender and a number of other editors benefited from outright gifts. He, Charles Holt of the New London (Connecticut) *Bee*, and Andrew Brown of the Philadelphia *Federal Gazette* were beneficiaries of Jefferson's charity.[33]

Of financial help also were politicians' efforts to enlarge newspaper subscription lists. Politicians considered newspapers a valuable source of political information,[34] and party leaders and workers often bought them in large numbers and circulated them gratuitously.[35] While the politicians' primary motive often may have been to receive and spread information, their assistance with circulation helped provide financial support for editors.

Subscriptions were so important as a financial support that some editors such as Thomas Ritchie largely were able to eschew advertising. Politicians recognized the importance of subscription revenue and often sought new subscribers for preferred or endangered newspapers. The national Republican leadership was especially active in attempting to gain a substantial circulation for Philip Freneau's *National Gazette*. Jefferson encouraged fellow Republicans to subscribe,[36] and he and Madison enthusiastically sought subscribers in their home state of Virginia. Madison lent his name to Virginians soliciting subscribers,[37] and in the fall of 1791 he returned to the national capital with his own list of subscribers from Orange County.[38] In Philadelphia, General Henry Lee gathered subscriptions;[39] Daniel Carroll signed up Maryland subscribers;[40] John Hancock and Samuel Adams secured subscriptions in Massachusetts.[41]

Methods unique to the period were used to raise circulation revenue. During election campaigns, state party managers bought bundles of pa-

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[32]See Nathaniel Willis' 1858 statement about his operation of the *Eastern Argus* in Portland, Maine, in Frederic Hudson, *Journalism in the United States, from 1690 to 1872* (New York, 1873), 290.

[33]Jefferson to Monroe, July 17, 1802, P. Ford, IX, 390.

[34]Jefferson wrote Monroe that he assumed Monroe "probably receive[d] Freneau's paper regularly, and consequently all the news of any importance." May 5, 1793, *ibid.*, VI, 238.

[35]Boston *New England Palladium*, May 10, 1803; New Haven *Connecticut Journal*, Feb. 24, 1803; Elisha Babcock to Ephraim Kirby, Feb. 3 and March 29, 1803, Kirby Papers, Duke University, and Sept. 17, 1801, in Cunningham (1963), 245-246.

[36]Jefferson to Washington, Andrew A. Lipscomb, editor-in-chief, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (Washington, 1904-1905), VIII, 405.

[37]Madison to Mann Page, August 1791, in Noble E. Cunningham, Jr., *The Jeffersonian Republicans: The Formation of Party Organization, 1789-1801* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1957), 169.

[38]Madison to James Madison Sr., Nov. 13, 1791, Gaillard Hunt, ed., *The Writings of James Madison* (Philadelphia, 1865), VI, 62.

[39]Madison to Henry Lee, Dec. 18, 1791, *ibid.*, 69-70.

[40]Carroll to Madison, Dec. 12, 1791, Madison Papers, XIV, 88, Library of Congress.

[41]Jefferson to Randolph, Nov. 16, 1792, Lipscomb, VIII, 440.

pers which they gave to county and town managers for distribution.[42] Postmasters by law were permitted and encouraged to collect subscriptions.[43] Newspapers collected subscriptions for other papers.[44] The *New-England Palladium* was supplied without charge to ministers, who then were expected to "spread...them among their parishioners and procure...subscriptions." Joseph Dennie's *Port Folio* was "sent to some gentlemen free of expense for similar purposes."[45] The financial power of procuring circulation was revealed by the offer of Republicans in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, in 1799 to raise 500 subscriptions for the local editor if he would print only news favorable to their party.[46]

Of a similar nature was political help in distributing newspapers. Distribution by politicians was intended primarily to spread political information rather than to aid printers.[47] Of direct financial benefit to newspapers, however, were postal regulations designed to allow cheap or free mailing of papers. Congress approved special postal rates because politicians considered the circulation of newspapers important to the political system.[48] Rates were too low to pay the postal costs and much lower than the rates charged for letters.

Of even greater financial aid to newspapers were government printing contracts. Costs for federal government printing were relatively small because needs were not great. The First Congress (1789-1791) spent approximately $6,000 for its printing, stationery, bookbinding, and related items; and its spending remained at that level for a number of years.[49] Expenditures from other government branches, however, raised the total and often were greater than those of Congress. In 1794, for example, the State, Treasury, and War departments expended more than $7,000;[50] and the collector of the port in New York City alone had a bill of $700 in 1804.[51]

In terms of individual newspapers, payments averaged approximately $150 yearly for printing the laws of Congress.[52] When this income was added to that derived from other government printing, the

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[42]Cunningham (1963), 129-130.

[43]C. Smith, 10.

[44]Fassett, 115.

[45]Levi Lincoln to Jefferson, July 5, 1801, Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress.

[46]Portsmouth (N.H.) *Federal Observer*, May 16 and Oct. 17, 1799.

[47]Lexington *Kentucky Gazette* , April 27, 1801; Hartford *Connecticut Courant*, March 31, 1800; *New-England Palladium*, Oct. 11, 1803.

[48]George Washington, Nov. 6, 1792, in J. D. Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, I, 128, and Statement of Members of the House of Representatives, *ibid.*, 132, both quoted in C. Smith, 4; and Jefferson to Thomas Mann Randolph, Jan. 22, 1792, Jefferson Papers, LXX, 12122, Library of Congress.

[49]Senate Report 247, 4th Cong., 3d Session, 1-2, quoted in C. Smith, 34; and William E. Ames, *A History of the "National Intelligencer"* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1972), 30.

[50]Robert W. Kerr, *History of the Government Printing Office* (Lancaster, Pa., 1881), 16.

[51]Cheetham to Jefferson, July 25, 1804, Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress.

[52]C. Smith, 40 and 46.

patronage to some editors became sizable. During Jefferson's first term, Samuel Harrison Smith's printing for the State Department alone averaged nearly $2,000 per year,[53] while William Duane earned between one and two thousand dollars annually from government printing.[54] On the state and county levels also government printing could be lucrative. The state printer in North Carolina received approximately $1,200 a year from 1800 to 1810.[55] While all the revenue from printing was not profit, it should be viewed in terms of expenses. Printing shop workers, for example, were paid no more than $5 a week, and editors $5 to $10.[56]

Officials also rewarded editors with government positions. The most notable appointment was Jefferson's employing Philip Freneau as a clerk of foreign languages in the Department of State to encourage him to edit the *National Gazette* . After the *Gazette* was suspended in 1793, Jefferson and Madison assisted Freneau in his attempt to enter a newspaper partnership with Thomas Greenleaf of the New York *Journal.* Despite their letters of recommendation,[57] arrangements for the partnership never were completed; and because the two politicians were not willing to provide funding for continuation of the *Gazette,* Freneau found himself on his own in further attempts to publish a Republican paper.

Advertising provided another source of political support. While subscriptions and printing jobs were important to the financial health of newspapers, most could not have survived without advertisements. "Merchants alone," wrote Noah Webster, editor of the *American Minerva,* "enable printers to sell their papers low, & they will have their advertisements displayed. A literary paper without advertisements would cost fifteen or twenty dollars a year, if daily, and in proportion, if published once or twice a week."[58]

While merchants did not always advertise exclusively in newspapers sharing their political convictions,[59] more often than not advertising and politics went hand-in-hand. The Federalists' early strength in newspaper support resulted from the fact that the majority of merchants in larger seaboard cities were Federalists. In 1795 Jefferson, echoing the sentiments of a fellow Republican, wrote that the Fed-

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[53]*An Account of the Receipts and Expenditures of the United States,* Vols. from 1802-1810, National Archives, in C. Smith, 18.

[54]C. Smith, 44.

[55]Raleigh *Star,* Nov. 29, 1810. In that year, however, the amount was reduced to $900.

[56]Milton W. Hamilton, *The Country Printer, New York State, 1785-1830* (New York, 1936), provides an informative narrative of the conditions that existed in the printing trades.

[57]Madison to Robert R. Livingston, Livingston Papers, New York Pub. Lib.

[58]Webster to the Rev. John Eliot, Nov. 25, 1798, in *Mass. Hist. Soc. Mss.,* Vol. 29, 10c.

[59]The Providence (R.I.) *Federalist Gazette* complained that the town's Republican paper, the *Phoenix,* had both the largest circulation and the greatest advertising patronage in a town that was overwhelmingly Federalist. Quoted in James Melvin Lee, *History of American Journalism* (Boston, 1923), 115-116.

eralists "live in cities together and can act in a body readily, and at all times; they give chief employment to the newspapers, and therefore have most of them under their command."[60]

Parties provided financial aid as well as moral support in the form of legal aid to editors. This help was especially valuable to Republican journalists during their persecution under the Sedition Act. Jefferson later explained:

> I as well as most other republicans who were in the way of doing it, contributed what I could afford to the support of the republican papers and printers, paid sums of money for the Bee, the Albany Register, etc. when they were staggering under the sedition law, contributed to the fines of Callender himself, of Holt, Brown and others suffering under the law.[61]

Legal aid included attempts to prevent editors from being indicted and arrested, free defense services at trial, help in paying fines, and when possible dismissals of convictions. Politicians also defended editors in civil suits which were initiated on partisan grounds. When Benjamin Bache was sued for libel in 1798, Moses Levy and Alexander James Dallas contributed their legal services, and Thomas Leiper and Israel Israel paid his bail.[62] Hamilton volunteered free defense counsel when William Cobbett was considering fleeing the country because of a libel suit brought by Republican Benjamin Rush.[63] Maine Attorney General Barnabas Bidwell and Joseph Story, both leading Republicans, served as defense attorneys for Nathaniel Willis, editor of Portland's *Eastern Argus*, when Joseph Bartlett sued him for libel in 1806.[64]

Of indirect financial aid but of vast help was politicians' assistance in providing information and written material to newspapers. Written contributions were intended primarily to present political points of view, but editors and politicians considered them necessary as a means of support if a newspaper were to carry adequate opinion. Because an editor usually had to serve as printer, advertising salesman, and circulation manager in addition to performing his editing chores, he seldom had sufficient time to devote to political writing. Besides, in a period when writing ability was becoming more important in furtherance of a cause and "editors" rather than mere printers were running metropolitan papers, comparatively few country editors were able to

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[60]Jefferson's notes on a letter from C. D. Ebeling, July 30, 1795, P. Ford, VII, 48.

[61]Jefferson to Monroe, July 17, 1802, P. Ford, VII, 167.

[62]*Massachusetts Mercury*, July 6, 1798.

[63]*Greenleaf's New Daily Advertiser*, Dec. 18, 1799.

[64]Fassett, 136.

write adequately their own editorial opinions.[65] If these country papers were to serve their partisan cause – or even fill their columns – contributed writings were indispensable.

In assisting newspapers editorially, politicians employed a variety of methods. Mathew Carey suggested one of the more ambitious plans for supplying the press with articles. He proposed, although unsuccessfully, that Republicans contribute to a fund to pay a writer $10 a week to pen political articles. Had the plan been adopted, most articles would have gone to Duane's *Aurora*, although occasional pieces would have been given to papers in Baltimore, Boston, and New York.[66]

Although such efforts were useful to newspapers, the greatest help came from politicians who wrote articles and letters themselves for the press. Both Federalists and Republicans considered the need for political contributions a serious one. Hamilton was among that group of politicians who believed writing for newspapers was one of the necessary ingredients for the career of a public man.[67] These politicians included the range from national leaders to local office seekers. Almost always writing under pseudonyms, some were occasional contributors while others such as Tench Coxe of Philadelphia were indefatiguable writers. Coxe's biographer, Jacob Cooke, compiled a five-page bibliography of articles Coxe wrote from 1789 to 1816 and discovered twenty-six pseudonyms he used.[68]

The fact that politicians contributed so much support to the press raises the question of how much control they exercised over newspapers. The aid is one of the factors causing contemporaries and historians to feel the press was susceptible to control.[69] The prevailing historical opinion has been that politicians controlled the press and that such a situation was unfortunate. This latter view seems to be the result of applying to the party press the standards of a later era, those standards being not only press independence from politicians but actually an adversary relationship with them.

While journalists and politicians expected the party press to be partisan, they criticized opposing editors for being under the control of politicians and condemned opposing politicians for having editors un-

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[65]M. Hamilton, 53-54 and 110-111; Tench Coxe to Andrew Brown, June 10, 1790, in Jacob Ernest Cooke, *Tench Coxe and the Early Republic* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1978), 223; Augusta (Ga.) *Chronicle*, March 19, 1808; John Israel to Albert Gallatin, April 15 and Oct. 6, 1799, Gallatin Papers, box 5, N.Y. Hist. Soc.

[66]Carey to Jefferson, April 24, 1802, Jefferson Papers, Lib. of Cong. Since Jefferson believed it would not be appropriate for him as President to propose a plan to Congressmen and since Duane was not enthusiastic about the plan, it was dropped. Jefferson to Carey, May 4, 1802, Jefferson Papers, Lib. Cong., and Duane to Gallatin, March 15, 1802, Gallatin Papers, N. Y. Hist. Soc.

[67]Eric W. Allen, "Economic Changes and Editorial Influence," *Journalism Quarterly*, 8 (1931), 345.

[68]Cooke, 530-534 and 553.

[69]Fassett, 63; John Quincy Adams, July 24, 1818, Charles Francis Adams, editor, *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, IV, 116; Cooke, 123; *National Gazette*, Aug. 15, 1792.

der their thumb. William Cobbett, in his inimitable way, was especially harsh. Speaking of Bache, he charged that "the infamous Lighting-rod, jun., was a hireling of, and in correspondence with the despots of France."[70] He claimed that editors of Philadelphia's *True America* were the "lickspittle tools of Tench Coxe."[71] In a similar vein, James Cheetham called William Coleman of the New York *Evening Post* a "hireling" of a group of Federalist politicians.[72] When Federalists charged that Republican leaders dictated the *National Gazette*'s opinion,[73] Philip Freneau replied in kind. If his annual salary of $250 as a translating clerk proved that politicians controlled him, he asked, did not Fenno's annual "emoluments" of $2,500 make him a "vile sycophant"?[74]

Historians have used such charges and countercharges as evidence that politicians really controlled editors and that editors thereby violated a journalistic rule. Such statements from the party press period, however, should not be accepted necessarily at face value. Contemporary criticism was intended more for political advantage than as evaluation of press ethics. In a period when Americans publically frowned on factional and party politics, charges that politicians controlled newspapers were aimed primarily at traducing opposition political leaders rather than editors. Criticisms of editor subservience rarely were stated in terms of any journalistic standard requiring independence but invariably were linked with accusations of party politics. Hamilton's attacks on the *National Gazette* centered on his claim that it was the "faithful and devoted servant of the head of a party."[75] In condemning Bache's *Aurora*, Congressman John Allen of Connecticut argued that "this paper must necessarily, in the nature of things, be supported by a powerful party....This is the work of a party; this paper is devoted to a party; it is assiduously disseminated through the country by a party; to that party is all the credit due; to that party it owes its existence."[76] To charges that he was responsible for what the *National Intelligencer* published, Jefferson pointed out, "Tory printers should think it advantageous to identify me with that paper, the Aurora, etc.,

[70] *Porcupine's Gazette*, June 1798.

[71] *Ibid.*, May 13, 1799.

[72] In Nevins, 32.

[73] *Gazette of the United States*, July 25, 1792.

[74] *National Gazette*, July 28, 1792. For other statements to the effect that editors were under the control of politicians, see Brownsville (Pa.) *American Telegraphe*, May 29, 1816; Hall to Pickering, July 26, 1799, Pickering Papers, XXV, Mass. Hist. Soc., and Rep. John Allen, April 20, 1798, in James M. Smith, *Freedom's Fetters: The Alien and Sedition Laws and American Civil Liberties* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1956), 15; and Jefferson, July 30, 1795, P. Ford, VII, 48.

[75] *Gazette of the United States*, Aug. 4, 1792.

[76] Speech before the House of Representatives, July 5, 1798, quoted in J. Smith, 117-118. For other statements attacking parties because they supported newspapers, see Philadelphia *Gazette*, March 11 and 12, 1800, and Hartford *Connecticut Courant*, July 6, 1808.

in order to obtain ground for abusing me."[77]

The fact that accusations were politically motivated does not mean, however, that politicians exercised no influence over editors. While editors did not admit publicly that they were controlled by politicians, the relationships between some editors and some politicians leave little doubt that some politicians could control certain newspapers either directly or indirectly. Especially prone to political influence were those papers which had been founded through the encouragement and aid of politicians. Of Fenno, whose *Gazette of the United States* expressed the official viewpoint of the Hamilton wing of the Federalist party, Federalist Fisher Ames said, "No printer was ever so correct in his politics."[78] William Coleman's *Evening Post* stood in a similar relationship with Hamilton. Although Coleman denied that Hamilton and other Federalists owned the paper, he consulted them for guidance.[79]

The situation was similar with the Republicans' leading party-established organs. While Jefferson and Madison perhaps did not directly control Freneau's *National Gazette,*[80] they did have a strong indirect influence. The *National Gazette,* explained another pro-Jefferson paper, was "published under the eye of...Thomas Jefferson."[81] Jefferson and his successors exercised even stronger influence over Smith's *National Intelligencer.* When charged with directing the paper, Jefferson as usual adamantly protested. "I neither have, nor ever had, any more connection with those papers [*National Intelligencer* and *Aurora*]," he claimed, "than our antipodes have; nor know what is to be in them until I see it in them."[82] Jefferson was careful to a fault of avoiding being associated publicly with newspapers, but in private correspondence he more candidly explained the relationship of the *National Intelligencer* to his administration. On the question of the accuracy of some reports in the paper, Jefferson wrote John W. Eppes that Smith "is at hand to enquire at the offices [of administration officials], and is careful not to publish them on any other authority."[83] When Vice President Aaron Burr was asked about the official position of the *National Intelligencer* he answered that it got "information and advice" from the President.[84]

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[77]Jefferson to Thomas Paine, June 5, 1805, P. Ford, VIII, 361.

[78]In John C. Miller, *The Federalist Era 1789-1801* (New York, 1960), 89.

[79]Hudson, 219.

[80]Both Jefferson and Freneau argued that the *National Gazette* was not established through Jefferson's efforts or its contents directed by him. *Gazette of the United States,* Aug. 8, 1792; Jefferson to Washington, Sept. 2, 1792, P. Ford, VI, 106-107.

[81]Boston *Independent Chronicle,* Sept. 6, 1792.

[82]Jefferson to Paine, June 5, 1805, P. Ford, VIII, 361.

[83]March 27, 1801, Jefferson Papers, University of Virginia.

[84]Burr to Barnabas Bidwell, Oct. 15, 1801, Henry W. Taft Collection, Mass. Hist. Soc.

With Smith's transfer of the paper to Gales and Seaton and the inauguration of Madison as President, the *National Intelligencer* remained just as firmly, if not more, under the influence of the Republican national leadership. Shortly after taking office, Secretary of State Monroe summoned Gales to his office because of an article the paper had carried on foreign policy. He bruskly notified Gales that any reports the editor printed on such matters would be issued directly by Monroe if the *National Intelligencer* were to remain the official organ. Gales accepted the terms under the full realization that he had little freedom to express his own views or criticize the course of the administration.[85]

Lesser politicians than the president and secretary of state could direct some editors. Early in 1790 when Philadelphia's George Logan decided to fight Hamilton's policies through the press, he was confident his essays could be published because Eleazer Oswald's *Independent Gazetteer* was "at his devotion."[86] Tench Coxe was able to influence the course of Philadelphia's *Federal Gazette and Evening Post* because he had a "conditional" contract with editor Andrew Brown that allowed Coxe to annul the contract whenever he wished, an option he exercised shortly after the contract was agreed to.[87] In a political race for the New York state assembly in 1797, editor Elihu Phinney felt obligated to run the long-winded, often trivial disquisitions of candidate Jedediah Peck even though the circulation of his Cooperstown *Ostego Herald* dropped from 800 to 300.[88] Other editors, while not under the control of politicians, easily were persuaded by them. Benjamin Russell, for example, opposed the Cincinnatus Societies until he learned that George Washington was one of the founders. Then Russell recanted and became a strong supporter of the organization.[89]

On the other hand, some editors were truly independent of politicians. At the most, politicians' suggestions to them were just that: nothing more than suggestions. Considering themselves equal partners in the political cause, many editors felt free to take or disregard politicians' suggestions and go their own way. A few editors actually exercised more power than some politicians; and, if directions were to be given, they came from the editors. One of the primary reasons politicians felt compelled to encourage the establishment of organs was that they could not dictate the nature of privately-established newspapers even though editors may have been sincerely committed to the

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[85]W. Ames, 90.

[86]*The Journal of William Maclay* (New York, 1927), 276 and 346, quoted in Frederick Barnes Tolles, *George Logan of Philadelphia* (New York, 1953), 109.

[87]Coxe to Brown, June 10, 1790, and Daniel W. Coxe to T. Coxe, June 14, 1790, both in Cooke, 122-123.

[88]Cooperstown *Ostego Herald*, Nov. 15, 1796, and June 1, 1797.

[89]George Henry Payne, *History of Journalism in the United States* (New York, 1920), 113.

party cause.[90]

A number of editors showed their independence by their willingness to criticize the actions of party leaders. Thomas Ritchie – although his Richmond *Enquirer* was established through the assistance of Republican politicians – argued that Jefferson's dealings with Spain in 1806 were a "melancholy example" of Jefferson's human frailties.[91] John Adams complained that as President he had received "nothing but insolence and scurrility from the federalists. Look back and read the federal newspapers in Boston, New York and Philadelphia of that period and you will then see how I was treated."[92] Even the real leader of the Federalists, Alexander Hamilton, could not always command obedience. Although he recommended that Federalists support New York Chief Justice Morgan Lewis in the state's 1804 gubernatorial election, most party newspapers refused to go along.[93]

Some editors – instead of being subservient to politicians – were political leaders. Foremost among them was William Duane, one of Pennsylvania's most powerful political figures in the first decade of the 1800s. Early in his journalistic career he openly broke with Jefferson on the issue of American shipping rights.[94] He submitted even less to Madison's discipline. In 1812 he warned Madison that if he did not drop Albert Gallatin from his cabinet, the editor would support George Clinton in that year's presidential election.[95] Some editors served as public and party officials. Benjamin Russell was elected to the Massachusetts House of Representatives in 1805 and remained in the legislature until 1821. Among members of Virginia's state Republican committee from 1800 to 1808 were editors Meriweather Jones, Samuel Pleasants Jr., and Thomas Ritchie.[96]

While it is true, as several historians have concluded, that some editors were mere sycophants of politicians, many – Bache, John Binns of the Philadelphia *Democratic Press*, Duane, Russell, Freneau, and Coleman, for example, the list being almost endless – were intellectually independent. They were supporters of parties not because of the financial support their politics might merit but because they were devoted to the political causes they espoused.

In return, politicians often were considerate and consistent in their

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[90]See Jefferson to Thomas Randolph, May 15, 1791, P. Ford, V, 336-337.

[91]Richmond *Enquirer*, May 13, 1806.

[92]April 20, 1809, Charles Francis Adams, ed., *The Works of John Adams* (Boston, 1854), IX, 619-621. Hamilton inspired much of the Federalist newspapers' opposition to Adams, but it is notable that editors felt free enough to criticize a President from their own party.

[93]New York *Spectator*, Feb. 25, 1804. See also Dixon Ryan Fox, *The Decline of Aristocracy in the Politics of New York 1801-1840* (New York, 1965), 63.

[94]"Duane against Jefferson," *Gazette of the United States*, May 1, 1801.

[95]*Aurora*, Jan. 25, 1812.

[96]Richmond *Enquirer* Jan. 23, 1808; circulars, Richmond, Aug. 9, 1800, and Feb. 1, 1804, in Cunningham (1963), 185.

support of editors. The many attempts to aid the press mentioned earlier demonstrated this fact. On the other hand, there were many instances of inconsistency and what appeared to be inconsiderate treatment of editors based on political expediency. Financial support was undependable or inadequate with irritating frequency.

Trying to collect payments from delinquent subscribers gave editors some of their worst headaches. Pleas for payment were common items in the newspapers.[97] Delinquency would not speak ill of political support if it were not for the fact that most newspapers were published with an intent of aiding their parties and their editors were led to expect they would be supported through subscriptions among party adherents. Benjamin Edes, frustrated that one-third of the subscribers to his Kennebec (Me.) *Gazette* had not paid, complained to readers, "As his chief support is from the Federalists, the editor hopes this call will not be in vain."[98] The Republican editor at Abington, Virginia, rebuked delinquent subscribers:

> In three weeks' time our stock of paper will be out, and we have not a dollar to help in the purchase of a new supply. When we ask such as have not paid for their papers, we generally receive this answer, that they only subscribed for encouragement. Fine encouragement, to take a man's labor and never pay him for it![99]

Party leaders also were critical. A Republican circular issued in 1808 in western New York complained that Republican editors were not supported as liberally as were Federalist editors. Every Republican, the circular challenged, should have considered it a moral duty to pay his subscription when due.[100]

To collect payments, editors offered subscribers arrangements as convenient as they could make them, agreeing, for example, to accept in lieu of money such items as pork, beef, butter, cheese, rye, wheat, corn, flour, wood, meal, oats, lard, eggs, wool, flax, honey, and candles.[101] Others appealed to their subscribers in verse,[102] or, as the Baltimore *American*'s proprietor did, in hyperbole aimed at pricking readers' political conscience:

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[97]Kennebec (Me.) *Gazette*, April 24, 1801; *National Gazette*, July 20, Aug. 18, and Sept. 11, 1793.

[98]June 5, 1805. For another of Edes' appeals based on party spirit, see his Kennebec *Intelligencer*, May 10, 1799.

[99]Abington *Intelligencer*, quoted in Natchez (Miss.) *Gazette*, Nov. 19, 1808.

[100]Circular, Canandaigua, March 23, 1808, in Cunningham (1963), 245.

[101]Columbus (Ohio) *Western Intelligencer*, Dec. 10, 1814; Kennebec (Me.) *Intelligencer*, Dec. 20, 1795.

[102]Fryeburg (Me.) *Russel's Echo*, May 17, 1798.

SOMETHING IMPORTANT

> Never did R. G. HARPER want an appointment – Never did Judge CHASE want a fat salary – Never did Mr. AMES want to hold his seat – Nor did Republicans want to turn him out of it, more, than at this crisis, the editor of the AMERICAN wants the payment of monies due to him.[103]

Neither could merchants always be depended on to give their advertising to papers of their political faith. The financial problems Fenno's *Gazette of the United States* faced in 1793 were due primarily to meager advertising. In Providence, Rhode Island, the Federalist newspaper, the *Gazette*, faced financial difficulties because in that overwhelmingly Federalist town, the Republican paper received most of the advertising.[104]

Politicians sometimes were just as undependable. Nathaniel Willis, editor of the *Eastern Argus* in Portland, Maine, after recounting his problems with politicians who supposedly were supporters of his paper, concluded that "politicians are not only ungrateful, but supremely selfish."[105] Government office holders did not always award patronage to papers which had supported the party before it gained power. Transferring patronage from a paper of the losing party to a supporter of the new governing party sometimes was slow. After Jefferson was inaugurated in 1801, the editor of the Republican paper in Pittsburgh, still not being awarded the government printing by the summer, complained to Treasury Secretary Gallatin:

> [T]he Anglo printer here [John Scull of the Pittsburgh *Gazette*], although he continues to throw as much odium on the President as he can, and misses no opportunity of Scandalizing him and Republicanism, yet he is employed to do all the printing for the United States in this place. You know sir there is a Republican Press here and I presume the President nor you will approve of Mr. Scull's having public Printing to do in preference to the Republican press here, which you know has been a support to the Republican Interest and the President's Character and Election.[106]

William Duane had numerous problems trying to get patronage. Even though his *Aurora* had been the most prominent newspaper in Jefferson's bid to be elected president, Jefferson overlooked the *Aurora* in

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[103] Baltimore *American*, Oct. 20, 1800.

[104] See James Melvin Lee, *History of American Journalism* (Boston, 1923), 115-116.

[105] Autobiography written in 1858, quoted in Hudson, 290.

[106] Nathaniel Irish to Gallatin, Aug. 14, 1801, Gallatin Papers, New York Hist. Soc.

favor of the newly established *National Intelligencer*, which was channeled most of the printing of the national government. To make up for the scarcity of printing, Duane opened a stationery business in Washington, but it failed because of inadequate support.[107]

Duane was not the only Republican editor to receive unfavorable treatment at the hands of the Republican leadership. Freneau, for one, had been induced to establish the *National Gazette* partially because of Jefferson's offer of a clerkship in the State Department; but when Jefferson resigned as Secretary of State, Freneau was left without support. He lost his government job, and Republican leaders made no provision for continuing the newspaper. Despite Freneau's efforts to keep the paper going even at a financial loss, it died for lack of support.[108] While Freneau lost a government job, other editors were unable to obtain one. John Daly Burk, after leaving the editorship of the New York *Time Piece*, asked Jefferson to recommend him as private secretary to some official in the administration. Jefferson promised to mention Burk to departmental heads, but he cautioned Burk that he had little hope that Burk would receive an appointment.[109] While it would be unrealistic to expect Jefferson to get a job for everyone who was seeking one, it does not seem improbable that the President could get a competent[110] former journalist a job if he tried.

Even the Republican treatment of James Callender might not have been altogether to the politicians' credit. Historians invariably have viewed the relationship between this journalist and the national Republican leadership as one that soured because of Callender's intemperance and surliness.[111] Callender usually has been pictured as a vengeful individual who irrationally turned on a patient, benevolent Jefferson and became his most virulent opponent. Callender, indeed, was not a person who invited high regard. He tended to drunkenness, slovenliness, and abusiveness. His relationship with the Republican leaders, however, usually has been told from the politicians' side. Even though Callender tended to put a favorable light on his motives, his own account is not beyond credibility. Awareness of his feeling of having been mistreated by the Republican leaders may help make him a little more sympathetic figure.

An English refugee who settled in Philadelphia, Callender was the most intemperate of Republican writers. He established his American reputation with his pamphlet "History of the United States

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[107] Duane to Gallatin, Aug. 12, 1802, in Worthington C. Ford, "Letters of William Duane," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, Series 2, XX (1907), 394.

[108] Jefferson to Thomas Mann Randolph, Nov. 2, 1793, P. Ford, VI, 437-438.

[109] Jefferson to Burk, June 21, 1801, *ibid.*, VIII, 66.

[110] Burk later became a lawyer and wrote a history of Virginia. J. Smith, 219.

[111] See Mott, 30-35, for a typically glowing treatment of Jefferson in the Callender affair.

for 1796." In it, he charged that Hamilton had stolen from the U. S. Treasury, an accusation which forced Hamilton to admit his affair with Mrs. James Reynolds in an attempt to vindicate his reputation for financial integrity. In 1798, fearing the Alien and Sedition Acts, Callender fled to the haven of Republican Virginia. He appealed to Jefferson for help in finding a job, and Jefferson sent him fifty dollars. Soon he became a writer for the Richmond *Examiner*. In the fall of that year he began making plans for the publication of a pamphlet entitled "The Prospect Before Us" to assist Jefferson in his presidential campaign. He again approached Jefferson for aid and again received fifty dollars. Soon he began sending the Vice President proofs of the pamphlet. Jefferson responded with praise. "Such papers," he said, "...inform the thinking part of the nation."[112] "The Prospect Before Us" was unsurpassed as abuse of John Adams. Callender wrote:

> [The President] has never opened his lips, or lifted his pen without threatening or scolding. The grand object of his administration has been to exasperate the rage of contending parties, to calumniate and destroy every man who differs from his opinions....[He] is not only a repulsive pedant, a gross hypocrite, and an unprincipled oppressor, but...in private life, one of the most egregious fools upon the continent.

For this, Federalists charged Callender with violation of the Sedition Act. Republicans, at Jefferson's request,[113] came to the journalist's aid by serving as his defense attorneys.[114] All, however, was for naught. Callender was convicted, fined $200, and sentenced to nine months in jail.[115] There, he had time to write a second volume of "The Prospect Before Us," just as abusive of Adams as was the first volume.

After Callender had spent eight months in prison, Jefferson assumed the presidency and pardoned him – as he did all people convicted under the Sedition Act – on March 16. His fine, however, was not returned until three months later. During this time, Callender became impatient with the delay. Three weeks before release from jail, he asked Jefferson that the fine be remitted because he could not leave jail without paying it.[116] On April 12, after being released, he repeated his plea to Jefferson, complaining of the "unexampled treatment which

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[112] To Callender, Oct. 6, 1799, P. Ford, VII, 395.

[113] Jefferson to Monroe, May 26, 1800, *ibid.*, 448.

[114] J. Smith, 334-358; Miller (1951), 217-218.

[115] *Aurora*, June 13, 1800.

[116] Feb. 23, 1801, in Worthington C. Ford, "Thomas Jefferson and James Thomson Callender," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* (1896-1897), I, 32.

I have received from the party" and pointing out his financial difficulties:

> During the two years that I have been in Richmond, I was paid ten dollars per week as an editor for four months and a half; for a half of the rest of that time, I received victuals; and for what I did in the next nine months I neither received, nor do I ever expect to receive a single farthing. I mention these particulars as this is probably the close of my correspondence with you, that you may not suppose that I, at least, have gained anything by the victories of the Republicans. By the cause, I have lost five years of labor; gained five thousand personal enemies; got my name inserted in five hundred libels, and have ultimately got something very like a quarrel with the only friend I had in Pennsylvania.[117]

Callender felt the President was showing little responsiveness. In late April he told Madison that in writing to Jefferson he "might as well have addressed a letter to Lot's wife." He also suspected that Jefferson was unconcerned about creating a conflict between the President and the journalist. "And surely, Sir," he wrote Madison, "many syllogisms cannot be necessary to convince Mr. Jefferson that, putting feelings and principles out of the question, it is not proper for him to create a quarrel with me."[118] Soon afterward, he wrote Attorney General Levi Lincoln that he had never received "any communication from Mr. Jefferson, which I could regard as amounting to a serious mark of attention."[119] He then appealed to Virginia Governor James Monroe to expedite the refunding of the fine, but Monroe explained that legal technicalities were involved. Callender easily may have viewed this reply as procrastination, reasoning that if the President truly wished to have the fine refunded, he would have faced no real obstacle in getting it done immediately. He left Monroe, grumbling of "the ingratitude of the republicans who after getting into power had left him in the ditch."[120]

Almost ten weeks after he had ordered the fine repaid, Jefferson decided to assist in raising money to reimburse Callender the $200.[121] Whether this money was intended as charity or to mollify Callender is uncertain. By then, however, despite the fact Jefferson had delivered $50 to Callender through the President's personal secretary, the journalist had grown bitter, feeling Republican leaders had neglected and

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[117] Callender to Jefferson, April 12, 1801, *ibid.*, 33-34.

[118] April 27, 1801, *ibid.*, 35.

[119] April 29, 1801, Gallatin Papers, New York Hist. Soc.

[120] Monroe to Madison, May 23, 1801, Monroe Papers, New York Pub. Lib.

[121] Jefferson to Monroe, May 26, 1801, P. Ford, IX, 259.

mistreated him. He hinted that Federalists would be only too happy to know that Jefferson had encouraged Callender's scurrility and abuse of Adams.[122] Some Republicans had mistrusted Callender all along. John Taylor of Caroline had cautioned Jefferson in early 1800 to be circumspect in his relations with Callender "because upon any disappointment of his expectations...there is no doubt in my mind, from the spirit his writings breathe, that he would yield to motives of resentment." Taylor was concerned about what Callender might do with some of Jefferson's letters he possessed.[123]

When Jefferson saw that Callender did not accept with gratitude the money Jefferson had sent him, he instructed Monroe that fifty dollars more he had sent to Monroe was not to be used.[124] When Callender began to divulge that he had received money from Jefferson while writing against the Adams administration, Jefferson reacted defensively. "I am really mortified at the base ingratitude of Callender," he said. "It presents human nature in a hideous form." He claimed that the aid he had given Callender was from "mere motives of charity.[125] Even though he had written Callender confidentially while the latter was working on material attacking Adams that his writing would produce a good effect,[126] he now claimed that the money he had given was really an attempt to get Callender to stop writing, "yielded under a strong conviction that he was injuring us by his writing."[127] Callender's fine finally was remitted to him on June 20, 1801, almost four months after Jefferson's inauguration; but when Jefferson turned him down for the postmaster's job at Richmond, Callender turned on Jefferson. On July 11, Callender and Henry Pace established the Richmond *Examiner*, which quickly became Jefferson's worst vilifier. Callender revealed the letters which had passed between him and Jefferson when the latter was vice president and charged that Jefferson had sponsored the worst attacks on Adams.[128] It was Callender who published some of the most malicious stories about Jefferson, including one that Jefferson had fathered the children of one of his slaves. Callender, while drunk, drowned one night in 1803.

If the Jefferson-Callender episode were an isolated instance of Jefferson's approach to editors, it more easily could be dismissed as caused by the personality of Callender. A number of other incidents, however, indicated Jefferson's moral support was not always to be depended on.

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[122] Callender to Madison, April 17, 1801, in W. Ford (1896-97), 35.

[123] Taylor to Wilson Cary Nicholas, Jan. 31, 1800, in Cunningham (1957), 171.

[124] Jefferson to Monroe, June 1, 1801, in W. Ford (1986-97), 39.

[125] To Monroe, July 15, 1802, Lipscomb, X, 330.

[126] Jefferson to Callender, Oct. 6, 1799, P. Ford, VII, 395.

[127] To Monroe, July 15, 1802, Lipscomb, X, 331.

[128] W. Ford (1896-97) provides an anthology of the correspondence between Jefferson and Callender.

The most notable case involved Freneau. When Washington, bothered by the arguments his two most important cabinet officers carried on in the press, asked Jefferson and Hamilton to desist for the sake of the government, Jefferson denied that he was involved with the *National Gazette*. His editorial relationship with the paper, he claimed, was limited to providing copies of the Leyden *Gazette* to Freneau so that a "juster view of the affairs of Europe" could be provided. He protested falsely that he had never had any influence over the conduct of the paper, had never written for it, and had never encouraged others to write for it.[129] Although Jefferson offered to resign from the cabinet and a facade of decorum was restored, the newspaper battle continued. However, Freneau's job as translator in Jefferson's State Department cost the editor almost as much as he made because he had to hire translators to do the work. The *National Gazette* lost money, Jefferson was not prepared to support it with his own money, Freneau lost his clerkship when Jefferson resigned in 1793, and the paper was forced to suspend publication.[130] Later, Jefferson behaved in a similar fashion when he felt Washington might blame him for articles appearing in Bache's *Aurora*. He seemed extremely eager to protest again that he was in the habit of never writing "a word for the public papers."[131] Even after he became president he was sensitive not to be identified with any paper, including his own organ, the *National Intelligencer*.[132]

The best that can be said of Jefferson in these episodes is that he played the practical politician. He had nothing to gain by being identified with newspaper partisanship in a period when party politics was frowned on. The fact that many partisan papers were abusive in their language probably intensified Jefferson's reluctance to be associated publicly with them. Reacting with what seems a touch of both paranoia and a sense of his own importance in the eyes of opponents, he once complained, "I am the single object of their [Federalist newspapers'] accumulated hatred."[133] If he detested Federalist newspapers as much as that remark indicated, it is easy to comprehend why he did not want the public to know he was encouraging in Republican papers the same gross behavior found among Federalist papers.

While such pretenses may have been justifiable in terms of practi-

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[129] Jefferson to Washington, Sept. 9, 1792, P. Ford, VI, 101-109. Jefferson's claim that he had not written for the newspapers was a fabrication. Near the end of his life, Philip Freneau claimed that Jefferson had written a number of articles for the *National Gazette* and exhibited a marked file of the newspaper as proof. See Lewis Leary, *That Rascal Freneau: A Study in Literary Failure* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1941), 212. Jefferson's correspondence and newspaper files provide much evidence that Jefferson wrote for newspapers on numerous occasions after becoming President.

[130] Leary, 243; C. Smith, 19; Miller (1960), 97.

[131] Washington, June 19, 1796, P. Ford, VII, 81-85.

[132] Jefferson to Paine, June 5, 1805, *ibid.*, VIII, 360-362.

[133] To William Short, Jan. 23, 1804, in Pollard, 75.

cal politics,[134] Jefferson as president built a record with the press that was not conducive to public enlightenment. His relationship with the press, according to Jerry Knudson, was at its worst during the controversy over his embargo policy in 1807-1809. He attempted to keep the reasons for his decision secret, even though the American political system supposedly was based on public information, and never actively tried to educate Republican editors or the public in the necessity of the embargo. Once in office, it appears he neglected to provide any direction for his party's press.[135]

In fairness to politicians, however, Jefferson should not be considered the epitome of them. Madison and Hamilton were much more industrious in cultivating the press, and other men in high office were more active in the journalistic battles.

Yet, politicians could not always assure the continuing loyalty of all newspapers. Several editors withdrew their support of their patron politicians, and some actually switched party allegiance. Cheetham's *American Citizen*, which Aaron Burr had aided financially, turned on him in 1802. After Enos Bronson took over the *Gazette of the United States*, the Federalists' original organ, it tended to drift away from strict party loyalty. The Boston *Gazette* took a similar course in the 1790s under the editorship of Benjamin Edes. The Pittsburgh *Gazette*, the first paper west of the Alleghenies, was established with the help of Hugh Henry Brackenridge, but it became so strongly Federalist under John Scull that Brackenridge felt obligated to start another paper to support his interests.[136]

Some historians have considered such instances as evidence that editors were fickle despite the support politicians lavished on them. The Callender-Jefferson episode especially provides fuel for the argument that editors were not loyal. Historians, it seems, have found it easy to place the blame on editors during a period highlighted by some of the nation's foremost political figures and some of its most abusive editors. Yet, most of the instances of journalists changing their political loyalty which historians have prominently mentioned provide little evidence that editors were at fault. Cheetham abandoned Burr because of Burr's political machinations against the national Republican leadership. Duane turned to factional politics in Pennsylvania after Jefferson, whose quest for the presidency had received its strongest editorial advocacy from the *Aurora*, gave the lion's share of national government printing to the infant *National Intelligencer* and turned his back on the

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[134] Jefferson was not alone among politicians in disavowing any association with newspapers they actually helped support. See, for example, the Salem (Mass.) *Gazette*, November 1802, in Hudson, 173.

[135] Knudson, 338.

[136] J. Cutler Andrews describes this episode in the paper's history in *Pittsburgh's Post-Gazette: "The First Newspaper West of the Alleghenies"* (Boston, 1936), 27-49.

Aurora. Noah Webster of the *American Minerva* turned on Hamilton, who had provided financial help in the founding of the newspaper, only after Hamilton split with John Adams.

What occurred more often than editors deserting politicians was a situation in which politicians encouraged editors to start papers but did not support them adequately once the papers began operation and frequently deserted them once politicians felt the papers had fulfilled their political usefulness.[137] Of course, this last action is understandable in a period when the press was intended to serve a political function. On the other hand, many papers were neglected even while the fight was raging; and editors were left on their own even though publishing a partisan paper was not intended primarily to benefit the editor and in most cases was not a profitable business. Continued support of the party's cause was left to the financial devices of the editors; and many, if not most, of them lost money. The problems of Callender and Freneau have been described.

During the eight years Bache edited the *Aurora*, he lost a total of from $14,700 to $20,000. At no time was the income from the paper enough to pay his family's living expenses.[138] Skelton Jones' Richmond *Examiner* folded because of lack of support,[139] as did Edes' Kennebec (Me.) *Intelligencer* and Kennebec *Gazette*.[140] These all were prominent papers. The misfortunes of lesser papers can only be imagined. Without government printing contracts, official favor, and substantial paid-up subscriptions, it was not easy for them to survive. Of the twelve papers established in Washington between 1800 and 1820, only Smith's *National Intelligencer* and one other lasted more than two years.[141] Of the eighty-one newspapers in operation at the time of Washington's inauguration, only twenty-eight were publishing when Jefferson became president.[142] This does not mean that no party papers became successes. A number did. The *National Intelligencer*, New York *Evening Post*, and Richmond *Enquirer* are good examples. Yet if editors had been primarily concerned about profits, rather than the victory of their cause, most could have found more lucrative jobs in less trying occupations.

Papers continued under hard circumstances because profit was not the most important consideration of the party editors. Certainly, there were some whose support could be bought.[143] But men like Bache, Fre-

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[137] See, for example, Nathaniel Willis' account of his trials and tribulations while editing the *Eastern Argus* in Portland, Maine, quoted in Hudson, 289-291.

[138] *Aurora*, April 23, 1800, and Aug. 11, 1802.

[139] Knudson, 51.

[140] Kennebec *Intelligencer*, June 6, 1800; Kennebec *Gazette*, Nov. 21, 1804.

[141] C. Smith, 25.

[142] Donald H. Stewart, *The Opposition Press of the Federalist Period* (Albany, N.Y., 1969), 7.

[143] New York *American Citizen*, May 24, 1802. Callender might have been an editor who could be accused of this disloyalty. Even Duane at one time threatened to change parties in an attempt to get

neau, Cobbett, Russell, and Coleman did not need financial inducement to support their cause. Some actually may have been ahead of the political leaders in their definition and espousal of the dominant political creeds of the period.[144] It was the cause, and not the financial gain that might be had by supporting it, that was their motive.

more patronage.

[144] Leary and Bernard Fay, *The Two Franklins, Fathers of American Democracy* (Boston, 1933) made such an argument in regard to Freneau and Bache.

BOOK REVIEWS

Philip Schlesinger. *Putting 'Reality' Together: BBC News.* New York: Methuen, 1987. First published 1978 by Constable & Co., Ltd., London. 331 pp. Paper, $17.95.

On a slow day in the early years of the BBC, an announcer was likely to come on air at the scheduled bulletin time and simply say, "There is no news tonight."

The anecdote, related by Schlesinger in his summary of the BBC's first decades, suggests both the paternalistic philosophy that underlay the founding of the corporation as well as something of the complacency that has pervaded its history. Since its inception as an "independent" broadcasting corporation, the BBC has fostered, with worldwide success, an image of itself as authoritative, impartial, and exempt from the kinds of news values that sully the rest of the working press. But Schlesinger argues that such an image is not reality and just because the BBC believes itself to be impartial and neutral does not make it so.

Despite the BBC's purported independence, Schlesinger's view is that the history of the organization indicates that it has been expected to promote a nationalistic agenda. From its role in the General Strike of 1926 to its present coverage (or lack of coverage) of Northern Ireland, the BBC has operated under a variety of strictures. Some have been formal, such as the Official Secrets Act and, since 1974, the Prevention of Terrorism Act, which banned broadcast interviews with members of illegal organizations. Others have not been written down, including the government view that the role of the BBC is to represent the orthodox values of the national interest. When the BBC has tested such boundaries, it has quickly felt the shortness of the leash. The BBC incurred the wrath of Margaret Thatcher during the Falklands crisis when BBC reporters, in efforts to stay true to the impartial imperative, chose to represent the Argentinian view as well as the British. Mrs. Thatcher expressed astonishment that "we and the Argentines are being treated almost as equal and almost on a neutral basis." The organization submitted to government pressure in 1985 and pulled a documentary on Northern Ireland that included an interview with a leader of the Provisional IRA.

But it is Schlesinger's argument that the BBC has had a relatively long and stable life because it has so seldom challenged authority. Indeed, it has admirably performed the function of supporting the status

quo and British orthodoxy not so much because of the overt political control now at work as much as institutionalized factors – a hierarchal system of controls and the internalized values of the reporters and producers on the line.

Putting 'Reality' Together's account of the BBC may have suggestions of the London *Gazette* – a newspaper that became renowned for its worldwide coverage but had the maintenance of the Stuart dynasty as its essential guide. The Schlesinger book fits nicely into a history of communication that examines information when it comes from highly legitimized sources.

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Peter Prichard. *The Making of McPaper: The Inside Story of USA Today*. Kansas City: Andrews, McMeel & Parker, 1987. 370 pp. Index. Cloth, $19.95.

This is the story of how Allen H. Neuharth, chairman and chief executive of Gannett, Inc., led the country's largest newspaper chain where others feared to tread, evoked sneers from critics who saw *USA Today* as an ego trip and a bastardization of journalism, jeopardized one of the longest earning streaks of any American corporation, and finally saw his dream secure when the newspaper turned a profit in 1987.

While such critics labelled the paper as little more than self-paced television, such *USA Today* trademarks as the full-page weather summary, beefed-up sports and business sections, and a liberal use of color began showing up in more and more newspapers. McPaper apparently has changed the way newspapers look and approach their stories.

When Neuharth asked Prichard to write this book, he said it would prove to be " a damn good entrepreneurial story and a pretty good journalism story," and that it is. According to Prichard, a Gannett employee since 1972, Neuharth made no attempt to control the manuscript and gave Prichard access not only to the newspaper's employees but also to corporate files. The result is an always interesting but sometimes appalling look at how hundreds of newspaper people toiled to get Al's Spruce Goose off the ground.

The sheer scale of the problems entailed in launching a national newspaper provides much of the book's interest. For instance, research indicated that magazine-quality color was needed to attract advertisers, but achieving uniform color reproduction at twenty printing sites proved an especially vexing and expensive problem. Newsprint and ink had to meet exacting specifications, printers had to be retrained, and

presses had to be bought. Lots of them. As Prichard says, Gannett bought presses the way most people buy groceries.

Even the selection of news racks proved to be a gargantuan undertaking. Neuharth wanted a rack that would be immediately recognizable and would allow customers to read the front page without bending down. After studying forty different designs, he provided his critics with additional ammo by settling on the now-familiar blue and white design resembling a TV set. Cost: $225 each. And Gannett would need over 135,000 of them.

If employees labored under the enormous problems of production and distribution, they also labored under the crushing weight of Neuharth's ego. No failure seemed to escape his eyes: if a news rack was dirty or if color registration wasn't uniform from coast to coast, the helpless employee risked receiving a blistering note on Neuharth's trademark peach-colored paper (employees called them "orange meanies" or "Pumpkingrams") or a face-to-face reminder of what *USA Today*'s success meant to Gannett's future – and the employees.

The book creates a surprisingly candid portrait of Neuharth, who emerges as part benevolent dictator and part Captain Bligh. Neuharth saw *USA Today* not only as a way to end his career on a note of triumph but also as a way of elevating Gannett, which Jack Germond, for many years Gannett News Service's Washington Bureau chief, described as just "a bunch of shitkicker papers."

If the newspaper failed, Neuharth told his board of directors, he would resign, and he worked tirelessly to prevent either from happening. For the first year, he personally laid out the paper every day, read every word of everything that was written, and often wrote and rewrote headlines on his 1926 Black Royal typewriter. Its pages reflected his conviction that *USA Today* was to be a newspaper for readers, not for other editors, and that its succinct, fact-filled stories ("McNuggets," critics called them) would exemplify what Neuharth termed "the journalism of hope," stories that covered "all of the news with accuracy, but without anguish, with detail but without despair." During the first few months of publication, so intense was the second guessing about lead stories that, as Prichard wryly notes, *USA Today* was probably the only newspaper in which reporters fought to keep their stories off the front page.

While Prichard gives Neuharth the lion's share of the credit for the newspaper's success, he also concludes that his compulsive, hands-on management style sometimes caused significant problems. Because he didn't understand computers, Neuharth ignored an early request for a computer expert with the result that within a month of its launch, *USA Today* had a computer system that could not produce a bill; when the paper began selling subscriptions in metro markets, customers'

names and addresses were recorded on scraps of paper because the computer's memory banks were filled.

"Sometimes he managed by persuasion, sometimes by fear," Prichard writes, and he recounts a number of hair-raising stories of Neuharth's sometimes brutal management style. The most bizarre example occurred in 1984, when the paper was losing more than $10 million a month. Neuharth invited a group of *USA Today* executives to Florida for a strategy session and appeared before them wearing a crown of thorns. Before a huge wooden cross, Neuharth announced, "I am the crucified one." He then presided over "The Service for the Passed-Over," based on the Jewish Passover ceremony, which Neuharth explained, signified that the executives were going to be "passed over" unless the newspaper cut its losses. Some looked on with amusement, but Neuharth's personal assistant called it "the most offensive thing I've seen in my adult life. I was waiting for lightning to strike the place down." Lightning didn't strike, and *USA Today* passed over into profit, because of or in spite of Neuharth's obsession with detail.

Prichard shares some of his boss' obsession. He says he conducted over 150 interviews whose transcripts fill five large volumes, and the book sometimes reads as though he interviewed everyone who ever worked for Gannett and almost everyone who ever read the newspaper. But despite its disjointed organization and sometimes distracting detail, the book is what Neuharth wanted: a very good entrepreneurial story and a pretty good journalism story.

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University of Delaware

Richard Samuel West. *Satire on Stone: The Political Cartoons of Joseph Keppler*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988. 465 pages. $39.95.

Confessing that he has "woven some swatches of Keppler's life with very few threads indeed," Richard Samuel West goes on to state that much information about the life of this important German-American cartoonist simply does not exist. Working within this limitation, West has written a remarkable book, the first biography of Joseph Keppler, one of the creators of modern political cartooning.

Keppler was born in 1838 in Vienna and was graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in 1855. Unable to find employment as an artist, he set out for Italy. There, he joined a traveling theatrical company to paint scenery and backdrops and soon became its lead actor. For the next nine years, he enjoyed great success on the stage, and West believes

these early stage experiences were important to Keppler's later adaptation of theatrical devices to his cartoons. During this time he also contributed cartoons to the satirical magazine *Kikeriki*!

In late 1867, Keppler, his wife, and brother-in-law left Austria to join his father, who had emigrated to the United States shortly after the 1848 democratic revolution. He joined Heinrich Binder in St. Louis to publish a weekly satirical paper, *Die Vehme*, but the paper folded in 1870.

Convinced of the potential for a German-language satirical magazine in St. Louis, Keppler helped to found *Puck* in 1871. Despite the magazine's uncertain first year, an English-language version was begun in 1872. When financial problems forced closure of the two publications, Keppler moved to New York City to work for *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, the Democratic competition for *Harper's Weekly*, which then featured the work of Thomas Nast. Keppler's work soon attracted attention as genuine competition to Nast. While at *Leslie*'s Keppler met Adolph Schwartzmann, foreman of the print shop, and the two German immigrants decided to publish a new version of *Puck*.

Puck, Illustrirtes Humoristisches Wochenblatt! began September 23, 1876, and in a bold move, included color lithographs. The use of color set *Puck* apart from its competition, and in 1877 an English-language edition was launched. For the next eighteen months Keppler did all of the art for both magazines plus other work in order to bring in additional income. Later three men would be hired to do these tasks. *Satire on Stone* provides a fascinating glimpse of the development of the development of chromolithography and its impact on American journalism.

West discusses in detail the question of whether Schwartzmann supplied Keppler with the ideas for his cartoons, a rumor which prevailed even during Keppler's lifetime. Nast had been the first cartoonist to insist that his work must be his own, and West believes that Keppler, too, both conceived and executed his cartoons.

West compares Keppler's output with that of Nast and believes that Keppler, not Nast, was the creator of the legacy within which today's cartoonists work. Citing Keppler's broad political vision as a satirist desiring both to enlighten and entertain, West states that today's leading political cartoonists such as Oliphant, MacNelly, Peters, and Auth follow Keppler's tradition.

By 1880 the success of *Puck* was assured, and before his death in 1894, Keppler enjoyed wealth and fame. He was able to attract remarkable talent to the magazine to assist him with the cartoons.

Much of *Satire on Stone* is devoted to reviewing the then contemporary political situation so that today's readers can appreciate Keppler's cartoons. The book is illustrated with many black and white

cartoon reproductions as well as a section of exquisite reproductions of the chromolithographs. The color plates make the reader wish that all of the cartoons could have been reproduced in color because some of the monochromes are rather muddy.

With his background as the publisher of two journals devoted to political cartooning, West has made an important contribution with this book. A major figure in the development of American political cartooning has now been recognized with his own biography, and West has used his insight and expertise to assist the reader in evaluating Keppler's influence. Adding to the book's usefulness are extensive and interesting notes, a bibliography, and an appendix with brief biographies of Keppler's colleagues and students.

Lucy S. Caswell
The Ohio State University

David E. Morrison and Howard Tumber. *Journalists at War: The Dynamics of News Reporting during the Falklands Conflict.* London: Sage Publications, 1988. 370 pp. Index. Paper, $16.95, cloth, $49.95.

The authors have sought to accomplish four main goals: to discuss how the Falklands War of 1982 was reported from the British side; how the news was handled by the Ministry of Defense, the BBC, and other agencies; how the news was perceived by British newspaper readers, radio listeners, and TV viewers; and what the current status of independent news is in Britain.

Regarding the first goal, media personnel who covered the war were interviewed as to how they functioned, and the book contains extensive quotes from them. The first eight chapters are devoted to these matters. Included are details as to how the Ministry of Defense information officers – the "minders"– fared in their duties of shepherding the reporters and correspondents about their activities. Caught between officialdom and the journalists, the minders' lot was an unenviable one. Not fully accepted by military and navy personnel, they were sometimes cordially detested by their charges. Tensions and misunderstandings were therefore inevitable. It also proved difficult for reporters to get their stories to their home offices, logistics and censorship often to blame, as were the war conditions in general, further adding to the frustrations of all involved.

Other chapters focus on how the agencies of government and the publishing industry interrelated, with considerable attention being paid to what sort of news was required in time of war: propaganda or cool, objective presentations of facts. Key questions pertaining to freedom of information in a democracy at war are explored.

Numerous charts are presented revealing how the public perceived the war news that it encountered. These were based on straight-forward but effective questionnaires, respondents being simply asked what they thought of what they read, heard, and saw. From the point of view of champions of a free press, the results of the surveys were encouraging.

The concluding chapter is not a mere recapitulation of the study, but rather a discussion of British public opinion regarding the necessity of their nation's maintaining an independent media. The public clearly understood that the fourth estate must not become merely another governmental service in time of war. Its very independence is of great value to the country and its traditional interests. The feeling was that the media should never be subordinated to a party, class, or group, nor to justifying the conduct of the nation itself, if the price was the loss of a free press and independent broadcasting systems.

This detailed account contains much useful analysis regarding how journalists traditionally function in a free society. In particular, those desiring to understand how news is gathered, processed, and disseminated in the modern era of big organizations and advanced technology, often against a background of world tensions and strife, will find much of interest in this useful, generally well-written study.

Alfred Cornebise
University of Northern Colorado

Henry Lewis Suggs. *P.B. Young, Newspaperman: Race, Politics and Journalism in the New South, 1910-1962.* Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia, 1988. 254 pp. $24.95.

This insightful biography of Plummer Bernard Young, Sr., who for more than fifty years published one of the nation's outstanding black newspapers – the Norfolk *Journal and Guide* – provides historians with a most helpful insight into black Americans' struggle to deal effectively with racism during the period from World War I to the civil rights "revolution" of the 1960s. Because of his subject's frequently vacillating attitude toward militancy versus accommodation in race relations, the author's task was a difficult one. His research appears to have measured up, however, to the challenge.

Considering the problems frequently encountered in researching black American history, the book reflects some exceptional accomplishment. Its author, an associate professor of history at Clemson University, uses the expertise acquired in his earlier book, *The Black Press in the South, 1865-1979*, to put Young's life into appropriate context. Working primarily with Young's own papers, Suggs has con-

structed a comprehensive and detailed account of the publisher's complex and sometimes contradictory activities. Upon occasion, he appears to be pushing his data a bit, stating conclusions that the evidence cited doesn't appear to drive. However, the possible cost of such indulgence appears a small price to pay for the riches of historical fact assembled here.

The book has a two-level index of nineteen pages; and twenty-four pages of notes provide excellent documentation.

As a result of Young's many activities, his biography provides numerous perspectives on other black American leaders such as Booker T. Washington, Mordecai Johnson, Luther P. Jackson, Ralph Bunche, W.E. B. DuBois, Thomas Fortune, and J.M. Gandy, and on black institutions such as Norfolk State University and Howard University, which Young served many years as chairman of the trustees. We also get perspectives on black organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, in which Young was active, generally, and on national political issues such as integration of the U.S. military services, the federal government's Fair Employment Practices Commission, the Democratic party's "Dixiecrat" revolt, and other areas of race relations, politics, civil rights, and education in the Southeast.

By virtue of its broad scope, in-depth research, fine detail, and integrated explanation of an influential figure's role in the life of his times, the book makes a significant contribution to the history of mass communications in the United States.

John DeMott
Memphis State University

Marlene Sanders and Marcia Rock. *Waiting for Prime Time: The Women of Television News*. Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1988. Illustrated. 214 pp. $19.95.

Memoirs of television news executives and news personalities are nothing new. They are often written by out-of-favor executives, who seek to set the record straight by chronicling what they view as their overlooked contributions to television news, or by news people in mid-career whose account of themselves, legitimized between hard covers, can fuel their careers. Witness Dan Rather's autobiography a few years ago and Linda Ellerbee's recent best seller.

Such books add bits and pieces to our knowledge of the television landscape, but the egocentric nature of the works tends to make them best suited for airplane travel. Not so *Waiting for Prime Time,* which is neither in the setting-the-record straight mold nor another polemic

on the shallowness of TV news. The book has particular interest to journalism historians because Sanders and Rock have chosen to relate Sanders' career in the context of the periods through which it traveled. The account has a lateral construction in a way, connected to the attitudes that defined women's roles in news over the past thirty years, rather than the narrow, goal-driven focus of the male model of most biographies. The approach moves the book out of the genre of celebrity biography into a work that makes a substantial contribution to the history of television news.

The book begins with what could have been the closing hours of Sanders' career. In March 1987 she was one of the CBS correspondents marked for extinction by the new CBS hierarchy during CBS's well-known house-cleaning episode. Not being a "star," she was offered a radio job, working weeknights to 11 with Thursdays and Fridays off. Affronted by the offer, she quit.

The close of her years at CBS was only appropriate in that it was affected by the show business values that had played a role in bringing her into television news in the '50s. It was her expertise in running summer theatre, not her news background, that resulted in her job as an assistant to a new television news show in New York that was to be hosted by Mike Wallace. When "Nightbeat" succeeded and the team was offered an ABC network opportunity, Sanders was only invited to go along on the proviso she would remain in the subservient "girl Friday" position to producer Ted Yates. He made it clear that hard work and willingness to take on authority was not the road to success for young women that it was for young men.

When Sanders finally arrived on air, it was because, for once, the prejudices of the times worked in her favor. When Lisa Howard was dropped by ABC from its afternoon, five-minute newscast, Sanders was put in her place. It was not so much talent as gender. The name of the show was "News with the Woman's Touch," and Sanders was the only other woman around. Eventually, she was able to succeed despite the limitations associated with women in news.

The book's greatest value to historians is not so much in its account of her role in legitimizing a movement that was ridiculed at first, but in the account of how network women broke down the barriers based on gender. In Chapter Six, "Women Make News," Sanders and Rock offer one of the most complete, first-person summaries of the steps the network women took to move toward sexual parity. On the local level, women were able to move into on-air positions and technical jobs thanks to the level of the license challenge. But network news operations are not licensed as are local television stations and the network women had to find different pressure points. What they found was Revised Order #4, a labor department ruling that covered all companies that held government contracts. By threatening action under the ruling,

by ongoing meetings with network management (news of which had to be posted originally in ladies' rooms), and a growth of trust and commitment between the women themselves, women brought about changes. Because the women moved when both the law and the profits were on their side, the women were able to prove they could do the jobs, and that has led to a retention, even expansion, of those changes despite the onset of de-regulation and the Reagan presidency.

Sanders does not overplay her role in the movement. In fact, she was on vacation with her family at the time of one of the first important meetings with management. She is frank about the difficulty of achieving consensus among the women. Her account is informed by her objectivity as well as research (she has utilized the NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund Media Project file to bolster her memory). Reading the book suggests that although this is recent history, barely twenty years behind us, the role of civil rights activism in changing the face of television news needs to be given a larger place in our teaching and research responsibilities.

Patricia Bradley
Temple University

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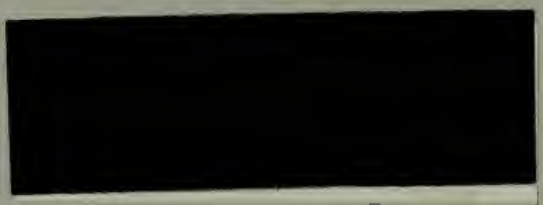

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Errata: In his historiographical essay in *American Journalism*, Vol. 6, no. 1, Dr. Marvin Olasky was incorrectly identified as an assistant professor of public relations at the University of Texas. He is an associate professor of journalism.

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American Journalism Historians Association

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FROM THE EDITOR

This issue brings to an end the five-year tenure I've enjoyed serving as editor of *American Journalism*. The editorship has been a most gratifying experience, and I appreciate the American Journalism Historians Association membership for giving me the opportunity to work with the journal.

The new editor is John Pauly. We give him the helm with full confidence that he not only will maintain the quality of the journal but will improve it during his five years, and we wish him the best.

Many journal editors will tell you that the job is a bear. It does, indeed, occasionally have its trying moments, and it does require an enormous amount of time. But my good recollections overwhelm the others. I credit my enjoyment to the numerous people—staff members and contributors alike—with whom I've had the privilege to work.

In almost every instance, contributors have been thoughtful, friendly, patient, and most gracious in all dealings with the journal's sometimes ponderous and trying editorial operations.

We hope that *American Journalism* has contributed to raising standards of scholarship, and for a large measure of that we owe the conscientious efforts of the members of the Editorial Board. In evaluating manuscripts, they work anonymously and receive little glory. It has been their efforts, however, that accounted for the consistent quality of material the journal has published.

I wish to give special notice to the journal's two Associate Editors, Jim Startt, whose evaluations of manuscripts always have been detailed, thoughtful, and prompt, and Gary Whitby, who had the foresight to found *American Journalism* in 1983.

Similarly, Ed Nickerson, the Book Review Editor, has done an excellent job at a task that is more demanding than one who has never done it would realize.

And I never can offer enough thanks to the assistant editors I've had over the years. All were graduate assistants in journalism at the University of Alabama, and all did an excellent job—although none did it better than the present one, Marion Steele.

Finally, without the support of the administration in the College of Communication at the University of Alabama, publishing the journal would have been impossible. I appreciate the support the dean of the college and the journalism department chairmen have tendered over the years.

—David Sloan

Joseph Pulitzer II and the European War, 1938-1945

By Daniel W. Pfaff*

Joseph Pulitzer II, editor and publisher of the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* from 1912 until his death in 1955, began the most active period of his influence over the paper's news and editorial content on the eve of the second World War. To be sure, he had not been a figurehead proprietor before that time. However, Oliver K. Bovard, the paper's extraordinarily capable managing editor for thirty years, resigned in August 1938, providing a natural opportunity for Pulitzer to take fuller charge, if he chose. He did. He had become much more active in directing the editorial page after 1929, when its long-time editor, George S. Johns, who the first Joseph Pulitzer had hired, stepped down.[1]

Yet the facts remained that because others had been largely in charge during World War I, and because of the greater scale of the second war, Pulitzer faced a situation that was both complex and new. This article traces the movement under Pulitzer's direction of *Post-Dispatch* policy toward the war in Europe between 1938 and 1945 from one of isolation to one of intervention and staunch support of the Allied cause. Other than a brief New York *World* campaign in 1895, which helped avert war with England over a disputed Venezuelan boundary,[2] and the jingoistic example of the New York *World* during the Spanish-American conflict, there was nothing he could draw upon in the experience of his father in fashioning the paper's response to the threat and then reality of the conflict.

It should be noted that the second Joseph Pulitzer has not been widely recognized as one of the most important American newspaper editors of the first half of this century, which he clearly was. The main explanations for this are his relatively low-profile administrative style, which differed from that of his autocratic father, and the

* Daniel W. Pfaff is a professor of journalism at Pennsylvania State University.

[1]See, generally, James W. Markham, *Bovard of the Post-Dispatch*, (Baton Rouge, 1954).

[2]Don C. Seitz, *Joseph Pulitzer: His Life and Letters*, (New York, 1924), pp. 201-207.

fact that he assembled and kept highly capable news and editorial personel, whose judgments he respected. For their part, his staff members recognized that he alone of the three Pulitzer sons had both talent for and deep interest in newspaper journalism and they knew firsthand that his love of the work kept him immersed in the the day-to-day operation of the *Post-Dispatch* throughout his forty-three years as editor-publisher. Those who served under him, it is fair to say, respected his ability as much as did those who had worked for his father. They recognized him as the final authority in matters of dispute, but knew him as well, as a long-time reporter who became Pulitzer's administrative aide described him, as one "who was no pantywaist, but was thoughtful and kindly in his manner and listened to arguments."[3]

The result of this combination of factors, as Jack Alexander expressed it in 1939, was that under the second Joseph Pulitzer the *Post-Dispatch* became one of the few dailies "which have preserved a real distinctiveness during an era marked by a trend toward uniformity. In any professional ranking of present-day American newspapers, The *Post-Dispatch* must head somewhere up among the first five."[4] Accordingly, Pulitzer's memoranda to his managing and editorial page editors typically described the course of his thinking about an issue rather than firmly dictating the policy which editors and writers were to follow. His usual practice was to react after an article or editorial was printed rather than previewing it. As the Second World War developed, though, he increasingly established pre-publication policy and did some of the editorial writing himself. The record of his behavior under the stresses of wartime conditions provides an intimate view of how he conceived the responsibilities of his editorship in responding to the exigencies of the times.

Even as the situation in Europe deteriorated in the late 1930s, Pulitzer shared the widespread hope that a second war there could be averted. However, his editorial page – of which former chief Washington Correspondent Charles G. Ross had become editor in 1934 – had been skeptical of British Prime Minister Chamberlain's appeasement efforts. "I must confess that as much as I despise totalitarianism, I have thought from the first that Chamberlain was right in trying for an understanding with Italy and Germany and that it ill-becomes us Americans who conceived of and then gave a death blow to the League of Nations to criticize Chamberlain and his present policy, " Pulitzer wrote Ross in March 1938. "As long as England is unprepared and unwilling to fight, what on earth can she do but attempt to negotiate as best she

[3]Interview with Richard G. Baumhoff, 12 Aug. 1983, Carmel, Calif. Other conclusions here are based upon extensive research for a forthcoming biography of Joseph Pulitzer II.

[4]Jack Alexander, "The Last Shall Be First." *Saturday Evening Post* 14 Jan. 1939: 5.

can?" He wondered whether writer Ferdinand Gottlieb's editorials had been "tinged by his particularly violent hatred of Hitler?"[5]

He leaned definitely toward isolationism in writing two months later "that instead of making faces at and giving lectures to European fascists, we should concern ourselves with our own failures to live up to the duties imposed on us by the democratic process here in the United States." It seemed to him that in Germany "fascism was a natural development resulting from the natural inability of the Germans to govern themselves. Why not tell our readers so and tell them that if they want to do something to prevent fascism in this country, the place to do it is at the polls? Meanwhile, much as I despise fascism, let us not overlook the popular support which put Hitler and Mussolini into office."[6] He was more emphatic by fall, telegramming editorial writer Ralph Coghlan that "however much you and I may despise Hitler, our people are certainly and rightly so not in favor of our going to war to help in another remaking of Europe. As I see it, we can only hope that the British efforts toward conciliation will at least temporarily be successful."[7]

Most of all, he hoped that the United States could remain neutral. Two years after opposing Roosevelt's reelection to a second term in 1936, Pulitzer drafted an editorial which in effect retracted his earlier doubts about the man. He now believed that with FDR committed to neutrality, the United States could "escape some of the worst effects of the present world madness." The shift in favor of the President was "unimportant," he argued, against the greater need for a government "that will preserve our liberties and help our people to withstand the attacks that have staggered most of the civilized world.... Whenever Roosevelt is helping to preserve American democracy...we are pro-Roosevelt." He left a small space for a retreat from total isolation by noting that the *Post-Dispatch* should strive to present "a realistic understanding of what is happening" and interpret those events "to the end that there may be preserved, as far as possible, the kind of country, the kind of civilization, that we all love."[8]

Following the declarations of war against Germany by Britain and France in September 1939, the paper began carrying a daily war summary in addition to separate stories on individual developments. When a survey showed that among *Post-Dispatch* readers, 74 per cent of the men and 64 per cent of the women read the war summary, it seemed to Pulitzer that the paper should present more of all the news in the sum-

[5]Joseph Pulitzer II to Charles G. Ross, 7 March 1938. Papers of Joseph Pulitzer II, Library of Congress, microfilm copy. All subsequent citations of dated correspondence are from this source.

[6]Joseph Pulitzer II to Ross, 25 May 1938.

[7]Joseph Pulitzer II to Ralph Coghlan, 13 Sept. 1938

[8]Joseph Pulitzer II to Coghlan, 6 Sept. 1938.

mary form. Armed with the support of four others, including Coghlan, who was now in charge of the editorial page, and editorial cartoonist Daniel R. Fitzpatrick, Managing Editor Benjamin H. Reese replied to Pulitzer that "frankly, I think your plan would cheapen your paper." Preparing additional summaries, Reese argued, would require more staff at increased cost, consume too much space, and require alternation of the conservative typographical display to which readers – Pulitzer himself included, Reese pointed out – had grown accustomed.[9] Editorial writer Irving Dilliard contented that an expansion of war bulletins "would throw us right into the machinery of whipping up a war psychology. The *Post-Dispatch* would be doing the very thing which certain newspapers are criticized in history for having done in the Spanish-American war." He thought the paper had already given the war "more attention than it deserves," pointing to the leading editorial of the previous day "which was meant to remind our readers that an overwhelming number of problems remain to be worked out in the United States regardless of war in Europe."[10] Pulitzer put the expansion of summaries "on ice."[11]

Although both Reese and Coghlan remained strongly for neutrality, Pulitzer gradually moved during 1940 from opposition to indecision to a firm belief that the United States must aid the Allied nations. In May he suggested that the Washington bureau do an article on the President's reliance on the Rev. George Endicott Peabody, headmaster of Groton, FDR's prep school. "As I see it, there is something genuinely sentimental in Roosevelt's dependence on... 'the Rector,' as Grotties call him," he wrote Ross, who had left the editorial page to become "Contributing Editor," working out of the Washington bureau. "Evidently it is a case of a religious man who believes he can bring religious forces to bear to win and end the war."[12] At about the same time, however, Reese informed Washington correspondent Marquis W. Childs that after consulting Pulitzer, Coghlan, and Washington bureau chief Raymond P. Brandt, he had decided not to print an article Childs had written about the diminishing British fleet. "We do not want to publish anything... that might be construed as propaganda intended to push us into war,"[13] he explained. Two days later, Pulitzer told Coghlan that he did not think even the severing of U. S. Atlantic and Pacific trade routes by the Germans and Japanese would justify entering the war. However, should the Germans "steam up the St. Lawrence and bomb hell out of the Chateau Frontenac Hotel in Quebec, which is just

[9]Benjamin H.Reese to Joseph Pulitzer II, 13 Sept. 1939.
[10]Irving Dilliard to Albert G. Lincoln, *Post-Dispatch* treasurer, 13 Sept. 1939.
[11]Memo, 15 Sept. 1939.
[12]Joseph Pulitzer I to Ross, 18 May 1940.
[13]Reese to Marquis W. Childs, 22 May 1940.

the distance of a long home run from the American shore" or land in Cuba, Nassau, or Bermuda, "I am convinced we would have to resist with force."[14] At the same time, he sympathized with listener complaints that National Broadcasting Company commentator H. V. Kaltenborn was encouraging intervention in broadcasts heard over *Post-Dispatch* radio station KSD. "I will not permit a hired hand like Kaltenborn to foment war hysteria over our station," he declared, adding that the commentator would be dropped if this continued.[15]

Events moved swiftly. On June 3, 1940, the War department agreed to sell surplus and outdated war materials to Britain; on June 5, the Germans moved into France. In a speech at the University of Virginia on June 10, Roosevelt shifted U. S. policy from "neutrality" to "non-belligerency." Reacting to this – without consulting Pulitzer, who had just started his annual month-long salmon fishing vacation on the Restigouche River in Quebec – Coghlan charged that "President Roosevelt all but declared war yesterday" in an angry lead editorial headed "To the Brink."[16] Roosevelt had recklessly ignored a number of important facts, he asserted. Among these were that there had been no overt acts by Germany against the United States; that polls showed public opinion strongly against entering the war; and that the U. S. Army "is microscopic compared with the great legions of Germany, Italy and France." He described the European hostilities as the outgrowth of "age-old hatreds" in which the United States had no part. It was too much to ask this country to "police the world"; it should only be asked to keep others "from transporting their wars to this hemisphere."

Public response to the editorial was enthusiastic, and so – at first – was Pulitzer's. "Sympathizing with and helping the Allies by selling them war materials is one thing, but burning up the country with bellicose statements that are certain to lead us into war very soon and in an utterly unprepared condition is a very different thing," he wrote Coghlan.[17] He suggested that Reese devote the next editorial title page to excerpts from the recent U. S. Senate Naval Committee's report detailing the country's unpreparedness. Print it in "freak body type," he advised, "so that it will catch the eye and be generally read, in other words print it as Hearst might print it."[18]

But within the week, he became more temperate. Because events had moved so fast, he wrote Coghlan, he now believed that the United States must immediately extend its zone of defense to the Caribbean and "as soon as we are prepared to do so," to the entire Western Hemi-

[14]Joseph Pulitzer I to Coghlan, 24 May 1940.

[15]Joseph Pulitzer I to George M. Burbach, KSD general manager, 19 June 1940.

[16]*Post-Dispatch*, 11 June 1940.

[17]Joseph Pulitzer to Coghlan, 17 June 1940.

[18]Joseph Pulitzer I to Reese, 16 June 1940.

sphere. He wanted the editor to understand "that at heart I am not a so-called isolationist." Despite the "past sins" of the British and French empires, it might now be "America's destiny" to lead a crusade "to keep the flame of Democracy burning in the United States and to rekindle that flame in England and France" and their possessions "now that they have been purified by their ordeal of fire."[19] On the question of conscription, he considered it a "patriotic necessity" for the *Post-Dispatch* to vigorously support a general draft. "I for one am convinced that a liberal dose of sacrifice, discipline and goose-stepping would be good for all of us," he telegraphed from Canada.[20] This rather striking shift of viewpoint in a matter of a few days suggested that Pulitzer's commitment to isolation had from the start been considerably weaker than that of members of his news and editorial staffs.

Accordingly, in fashioning news policy, his thinking turned increasingly toward subjects which would foster patriotism and loyalty to American socio-economic arrangements. To Reese, he suggested interviews with as many as 100 St. Louisans of German, Austrian, or Czechoslovakian origin who had recently visited Germany to find out whether they were "beginning to think that the Hitler way of life, with all its 'efficiency' is probably better for the average or below-average income group than the American scheme." He said he had heard that some of these people who worked as domestic servants in St. Louis "went back to the homeland and came back disgusted, and there are doubtless many stories on the other side and a good many in between." However, he would publish a story only if the evidence pointed a certain way: "If the preponderant view should turn out to be that conditions in America, bad as they are, are a damn sight better than conditions in Germany it would, I believe, make an exceedingly interesting and useful Sunday story – the kind of story, by the way, that the *Saturday Evening Post* might print."[21]

In the fall, when both were at Bar Harbor, Maine, he called on Walter Lippmann to get his off-the-record views on intervention. The columnist told him that he was opposed, but at the same time considered it imperative that the United States keep the British Navy afloat and from falling into German hands. For that reason he approved the recent exchange of fifty aged American destroyers for rights to construct naval bases at several British possessions, the beginning of the so-called Lend-Lease policy. He was less than candid with Pulitzer about this, for he was by this time committed to intervention on Britain's behalf and had even helped behind the scenes to arrange the

[19]Joseph Pulitzer II to Coghlan, 22 June 1940.
[20]Joseph Pulitzer I to Ferdinand Gottlieb, 10 and 26 July 1940.
[21]Joseph Pulitzer II to Reese, 29 July 1940.

destroyer deal.[22] "He gambles on the belief that Hitler will do everything in his power to keep us out of war,"[23] Pulitzer recorded in a memorandum of their talk. Lippmann also told him that the realities of the rapidly developing situation meant that Roosevelt had close to absolute power in deciding how to deal with the Allies, including the power to commit the country to war without a Congressional declaration. Many years later, Lippmann told his biographer, Ronald Steel, that he had found it necessary to influence Pulitzer to "rein in his staff" in order to keep the *Post-Dispatch* from demanding a congressional investigation which would have revealed the columnist's role in escalating U. S. involvement in the war.[24] Although Pulitzer put nothing in writing about Lippmann's having asked him to do this, it is plausible, given the emerging difference between the publisher and his top staff members on isolation versus intervention.

The day after he saw Lippmann, Pulitzer dictated some "Notes on U. S. and War" which began: "Let's get away from the appearance of pacifism and holding out the too-confident hope that we can avoid war. Let us rather tell the people that they should get ready for war." The realities, he continued, "resolved to the question of how long can we postpone war and by postponing it get ready for it....If we must throw the dice with death may it not be, after all, that the Roosevelt gamble may in the long run be the best gamble? To accept this thesis one must believe, as I do, that although Roosevelt has been dangerously impulsive and emotional and irregular in many of his acts and utterances, he is not deliberately planning to lend us into war."[25]

Coghlan didn't agree and had run an editorial criticizing the destroyer deal under the headline, "Dictator Roosevelt Commits An Act of War."[26] Pulitzer politely but firmly asked the editor to stop attacking Roosevelt: "I hope we can for the present at least cease charging the President with jingoism and dictatorship.... Let us make our position crystal clear... that we are not blind isolationists, that we are not for peace at any price, that we see all too clearly the menace of Hitler and Hitlerism and that our one and only objective is WE MUST GET READY FOR WAR."[27]

Although Coghlan tried to constrain his isolationist beliefs, by January 1941, he decided he could compromise no further. He asked for a leave of absence without pay or a transfer to another part of the paper. "I think it is a monumental error for the United States to enter the

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[22] Ronald Steel, *Walter Lippmann and the American Century*, (New York, 1980), 384-385.

[23] Memo, 16 September 1940.

[24] Steel, 385.

[25] 17 Sept. 1940.

[26] *Post-Dispatch*, 3 Sept. 1940.

[27] Joseph Pulitzer II to Coghlan, 20 Sept. 1940.

European war," he told Pulitzer. He believed the country had "a separate destiny" which it would sacrifice by entering the war and that Pulitzer's policy required him to soft-pedal or ignore his strong convictions. "I feel I have been in a strait-jacket and no man can work well in a strait-jacket," he explained. "I have felt that I was engaged on two fronts, the journalistic front and the front-office front."[28]

Pulitzer did not respond directly in writing. However, his memoranda over the next several weeks indicated that he managed to keep Coghlan on the page by becoming more conciliatory toward the editor and more reserved than previously in his expressions of support for Roosevelt. For example, calling it "purely a suggestion," he thought FDR might be reminded editorially that, "You were elected largely on your promises not to take us into war, but since election you have said little or nothing to confirm your pre-election pledges.... If you think the country should go to war or that it inevitably will be drawn into the war, has not the country a right to know your opinion?" At the same time, though, he stressed "that if we say this it should be so phrased as to make it impossible for anyone to say that we are trying to cast a slur on the honesty of the President's pre-election promises."[29]

For the balance of 1941, Pulitzer held to his belief in the inevitability of U. S. involvement. In late May, he drew a rather drastic picture in resisting pressure from Coghlan and others on the editorial staff to make a firm commitment to isolation. The situation was so grave, he contended, that he supported "our present policy of taking more and more risks of war" even though that could mean that "much of our present so-called 'civilization'" and "our recent conception of capitalism, the profit system and free enterprise" are gone forever. He would concede that Germany might win and would admit to readers "the hideous possibility and even probability" that this war, like the last, would not make the world safe for democracy. It would be necessary to fight "solely and simply because we think that Hitler is likely, sooner or later, to menace our American liberties. Trade is not worth fighting for; the American standard of living is not worth fighting for; world power is not worth fighting for. American liberty is worth fighting for."[30]

The memo was to Coghlan, but Reese read it first and objected forcefully. He saw no need for the paper to "flop over to intervention," shocking readers and giving its evening rival, the St. Louis *Star-Times*, the opportunity to "take full page one advantage of this, probably with some...copy on previous jumping beans." Instead, he counseled restraint, arguing that "it will not be long before the administration will

[28]Coghlan to Joseph Pulitzer II, 18 Jan. 1941.
[29]Joseph Pulitzer II to Coghlan, 24 Jan. 1941.
[30]Joseph Pulitzer II to Coghlan, 22 May. 1941.

lead to the way outlined in your memorandum."[31] Apparently accepting this, Pulitzer relaxed his pressure on the editorial page.

Back in the office in late August after two months of treatment for tuberculosis at a Colorado sanitarium – during which time Germany had invaded Russia – Coghlan, like Reese, argued for letting events guide a gradual pro-war shift: "Since the *Post-Dispatch* has been accused of leftist tendencies because of our liberal views, and because we are not afraid to attack wrong...I can easily imagine critics saying: 'Oh, yes, the *Post-Dispatch* was against the war until Russia got into it, but now it is all in favor of going in and saving the Bolsheviks.' We would be accused of following the party line. Such word-of-mouth advertising in a Catholic city like St. Louis would not do us any good."[32] Pulitzer responded that Coghlan had made a "beautifully reasoned argument.... I hasten to say that I do trust you completely to put into execution the policy of 'gradualness' which you describe." He said his views in May had been "badly expressed and could very easily be misunderstood as indicating that I want the paper to do pronto another Mexican jumping bean act. I did not have that in mind or if I did I stand corrected." However:

> What I do deplore is evidence I seem to find time to time...of a deep...distrust of Roosevelt's purpose. Parenthetically, let me say that you personally have not written a line of this kind. Although I was, I admit, very distrustful of Roosevelt when he pulled his secret destroyer deal I'm bound to tell you I've gotten over it....I do think that the man deserves our confidence and the confidence of our country....I must say that I sympathize with FDR deeply when he likens himself to Lincoln in the desperate days of the Civil War.[33]

Despite the deterioration throughout 1941 of relations between the United States and Japan, which had signed a mutual defense pact with Germany and Italy in September 1940, Pulitzer and his editors focused nearly all of their attention on Europe. Reese had raised the question in May of whether Japan would declare war on the United States if the Navy, now convoying goods to Britain, began shooting to deter German submarine threats to the American ships. He was concerned about how the United States could handle "a two-ocean war with a one-ocean Navy."[34] The attack on Pearl Harbor made that worry a reality.

Still, the defeat of Hitler remained the primary concern in 1942. A

[31]Reese to Joseph Pulitzer II, 23 May 1941.
[32]Coghlan to Joseph Pulitzer II, 21 Aug. 1941.
[33]Joseph Pulitzer II to Coghlan, 23 Aug. 1941.
[34]Reese to Joseph Pulitzer II, 23 May 1941.

few months after the United States entered the war, Pulitzer felt he needed a better grasp of events in Europe. He asked the British ambassador to the United States to recommend an Englishman, preferably a graduate of Oxford or Cambridge University, who knew and understood the European war theater. He wanted such a man as one of his secretaries. The ambassador suggested A. Mervyn Davies, a 1923 Oxford graduate who specialized in history and had served with the British air force in the First World War and was currently with the British Information Service in New York. Davies was hired and shortly was summarizing and then reading to Pulitzer from leading British newspapers and periodicals. The publisher's eyesight – like his father's – had become so dim that he could not read ordinary print. When it appeared that Winston Churchill was to be the main architect of British war policy, Davies spent an entire day describing Churchill's life and career to Pulitzer. On another occasion, he gave the publisher a detailed description of the Balkan invasion. Pulitzer kept a huge globe in his office, mounted in a moveable floor stand. Because Pulitzer could see its markings with relative ease, Davies often used it to explain troop and ship movements.[35]

From this point forward, there was no question as to how firmly Pulitzer stood behind the Allied war effort. This was somewhat dramatically evidenced in a short leading editorial he wrote in early March 1942. It was printed in bastard measure and type almost twice the usual size:

> WAR PROGRAM FOR THE HOME FRONT
>
> To win this war,we must keep production up – And we must keep inflation down. This means: Everybody working, No strikes, Every machine working 24 hours a day; and it also means: Ceilings on profits, prices and wages.[36]

Such a clearcut stance did not, however, eliminate every difference between Pulitzer and the editorial page. Another clash developed in late September of 1942. Coghlan had run several editorials critical of the United States and Britain for not establishing a "second front," the purpose of which would be to cause a reallocation of the German forces and thus weaken the Nazi advance into the Soviet Union which had been underway since June 1941. Pulitzer believed the two countries were unprepared to take on this new task and ordered the editorials stopped. "I especially object to spreading the suspicion that Roosevelt and Churchill are deliberately letting Russia bleed to death in order to

[35]Interview with Mrs. A. Mervyn Davies (widow), 21 Sept. 1984.
[36]*Post-Dispatch*, 4 March 1942.

save Tory capitalism," he explained. "I will not, and positively do not, believe it of Roosevelt and Churchill. I really think it is wrong to spread the idea."[37] Coghlan pledged to print no more on the subject.[38] The publisher's judgment did seem to have been correct when, about a month after that exchange, the Americans and British did begin a new offensive – in North Africa – a campaign which diminished the German forces by fifteen divisions and 2,000 airplanes.[39]

At the beginning of 1943, with the Allies' outlook somewhat improved, Pulitzer decided that the *Post-Dispatch* should print a "symposium" on the question, "What Are We Fighting For?" in order to "stimulate and clarify public thinking" about world cooperation after the war. Twenty prominent people representing various shades of economic, political, and social concern were asked to contribute articles on the question. The focus would be upon "general principles" in the belief that "specific blueprints on highly controversial questions such as independence for Poland, Finland or India, Japanese immigration or the Negro problem might cause disunity. Agreement on general principles is important; details can and must come later."[40]

The twenty articles were published between February 21 and May 2, 1943, and later made available in booklet form. Both President Roosevelt and Vice President Henry A. Wallace contributed statements, Roosevelt observing that "there is an important job of education to be done so that the tragedy of war will not come again."[41] Among the contributors were George W. Norris, former U. S. Senator from Nebraska; Virginius Dabney, editor of the Richmond, Virginia, *Times-Dispatch*; Robert Moses, New York City park commissioner; Harold G. Moulton, president of the Brookings Institution; Philip Murray, president of the Congress of Industrial Organizations; Wayne L. Morse, a member of the National War Labor Board; Robert Minor, Assistant General Secretary of the Communist Party in the United States; Mrs. George Gelhorn, St. Louis leader of the National League of Women Voters; The Right Rev. William Scarlett, episcopal Bishop of Missouri; and James P. Whiteside, a "common man" from Missouri.

Despite their differing perspectives and points of particular emphasis, there was a common thread of agreement about war aims among the contributors reflective of the popular consensus on the correctness of the Allied cause. The first objective, it was agreed, was to win the war; the second to achieve international cooperation and understanding sufficient to maintain peace. There was little disposition to go lightly

[37]Joseph Pulitzer II to Coghlan, 23 Sept. 1942.

[38]Coghlan to Joseph Pulitzer II, 25 Sept. 1942.

[39]David A. Shannon, *Twentieth Century America*, (Chicago, 1963), 486.

[40]Outline by Joseph Pulitzer II, 9 Feb. 1943.

[41]"What Are We Fighting For?" Booklet, St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*, 1943.

with the Axis powers. "Victory cannot come by appeasement," wrote Senator Norris. "It cannot come by a negotiated peace. There must be an absolute and unconditional surrender."[42]

After the series started, Edgar Monsanto Queeny, chairman of Monsanto Chemical Company with headquarters in St. Louis and a social friend of Pulitzer's, complained that he didn't think "the industrialists' point of view" had been presented. Pulitzer invited him to do so. The piece was, predictably, a spirited exposition of "free enterprise." In submitting it, Queeny told Pulitzer: "And we can do all that is promised if your old sheet will keep THAT MAN out of the White house for the fourth term!"[43]

That advice was not followed. When the time came, Pulitzer instructed Coghlan to come out for FDR: "In a nutshell – this is not intended for editorial use – 'with all his faults we love him still.'" He thought it would be well after the election, though, to "tell Roosevelt that were it not for the war he would not have been re-elected, that under ordinary circumstances no one has any use for a fourth term."[44]

Between March 5 and June 4, 1944, as events continued turning in favor of an Allied victory in Europe, the *Post-Dispatch* took another look ahead in a twenty-two-article series by Charles Ross entitled "Men and Jobs After the War." Its concern, as the title indicated, was measures needed to establish a workable postwar economy. Ross's subjects included "The Case for Speed in Reconversion," "For Low Profits on a Great Turnover," "Industrial Employment and the Farm Problem," "Competition Versus Monopoly," "Effects of Women's New Role in Industry," and "Views From the Right on Government Regulation." Reprints of the series were made available in booklet form.

Yet another series, written mostly by Pulitzer himself, came out in 1945. During the final days of the European war, he was among eighteen American editors and publishers invited by general Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces in Europe, to visit sites of the Nazi atrocities and of the decisive Allied landings. Among his companions were Julius Ochs Adler of the New York *Times*, Ben Hibbs of the *Saturday Evening Post*, Walter Stone of the Scripps-Howard chain, Stanley High of *Reader's Digest*, John Randolph Hearst of Hearst Publications, and Norman Chandler of the Los Angeles *Times*. Their tour included the concentration camps at Dachau and Buchenwald just days after their liberation and a confidential, background interview with Eisenhower at the Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Forces at Reims. During the trip, Pulitzer kept notes in a stenographer's notebook, written large with a

[42] *Ibid.* 42.

[43] Edgar M. Queeny to Joseph Pulitzer II, 1 April; Joseph Pulitzer II to RC and reply, 2 April 1943.

[44] Joseph Pulitzer II to Coghlan, 16 Sept. and 25 Oct. 1944.

heavy pencil, so that he could read them. From these, he dictated a series of diary-like accounts of the experiences, written in the first-person. They were published between April 29 and May 27.

Pulitzer found the grim evidence at the camps so shocking that it was hard to capture in words alone. In London, a cabdriver told him that the London *Express* had put together a photo-exhibit on the camps. As soon as Pulitzer returned to the United States after the fifteen-day trip, he urged the release of Army Signal Corps motion pictures taken at the camps and commissioned a display of twenty-five large photo-murals to illustrate the extent of the Nazi atrocities. Chief Washington Correspondent Brandt secured AAA-1 priority from the federal bureaucracy for the paper on which the life-size prints were made. They were displayed for twenty-five days in a recently completed but not yet occupied annex to the *Post-Dispatch* building. More than 80,000 persons viewed the exhibit, and an even larger number attended the forty-four showings of the Army film in the city's Kiel Auditorium. The exhibit then went to Washington, where more than 88,000 saw it at the Library of Congress, after which it went to Boston, Cleveland, New York, and other cities. In most places, newspapers of the host cities met or shared the cost of exhibition with the *Post-Dispatch*. The demand for showings was so great that the *Post-Dispatch* made a duplicate set of murals to tour through its Missouri and Illinois circulation area. The Detroit *News* was so eager for the exhibit that it got *Post-Dispatch* permission to make a third set of prints.[45]

Pulitzer made three public appearances following the trip. On May 18, 1945, at the invitation of the Missouri House of Representatives, he addressed the Missouri legislature in Jefferson City. Four days later, he was one of several who spoke at Carnegie Hall in New York City, where the Society for the Prevention of World War III sponsored a rally. On May 30, he spoke briefly to open the paper's atrocity mural exhibit in St. Louis. At each appearance, his message was blunt and direct: Those responsible for the atrocities should be speedily tried and, if found guilty, shot. His remarks produced these headlines in the New York *Times*: "Urges execution of 1,500,000 Nazis/Pulitzer Tells Rally Here That General Staff, Gestapo, SS and Industrialists Should Be Shot." He said his figures were only estimated, because "the War Department for some reason has been reluctant to release information on the subject. But I estimate that somewhere between 1,000,000 and 2,000,000 is a reasonable figure. Possibly 1,500,000 may be the final total."[46] Even before his trip, he had urged Coghlan to take "the strongest, toughest, most remorseless attitude towards all Germans until

[45]Julius H. Klyman, editor of *Post-Dispatch* "PICTURES" section, to Joseph Pulitzer II and response, 27 and 30 July 1945.

[46]New York *Times*, 23 May 1945.

the day arrives when they have had their German bestiality educated and whipped out of them. Economic opportunity for Germans in our own self-interest after the war, yes; but gentle, sentimental consideration in the meantime, no." Even earlier, he had said he was convinced that it would be necessary to execute large numbers of Germans "and then put the German people on parole and keep them on parole for at least one or probably two generations."[47]

Pulitzer was disturbed when only a relative handful of German militarists were charged with war crimes. He had understood Eisenhower to say when he met with the editors that he favored the course of action Pulitzer had been advocating. "I am still trying to carry out the purpose of the assignment that you gave us editors at that time,"[48] he wired the general. He asked for Eisenhower's views "on or off the record" as to why so few had been indicted, but apparently received no answer. He speculated to Brandt that the widely reported belief that military officers "regard their opponents as honorable soldiers and not as criminals"[49] was the probable explanation.

In any case, many applauded the publisher's harsh line, including a number of St. Louisans of German descent. "One thing that has astonished me," he wrote in response to a congratulatory letter from Milwaukee *Journal* editor Lindsay Hoben, "has been the absolutely complete absence of resentment of our position by what used to be called our German-American South side. Indeed, we have had only a very few letters of opposition, and they came from screwballs with very fine Anglo-Saxon names." There had been "numbers of letters from German families, one of the best having come, by way of example, from Adolphus Busch III," president of Anheuser-Busch. "When we find that a dog has hydrophobia or a rat has bubonic plague," Pulitzer concluded, "we protect society by eliminating them. That in my opinion is what we must do with German militarism...Hitler after all was merely a symptom of an old, old disease. I do hope that the Milwaukee Journal may see fit to follow this approach."[50] When Gottlieb told Pulitzer that some ministers opposed showing the atrocity films, he responded: "If some of these conscientious objector pastors try to make a real issue of the film, I would crack them over the head without mercy."[51]

Gottlieb knew why. Just the day before, on June 4, 1945, Pulitzer had dictated a memo to the editorial writer which fairly summarized the evolution of his thinking through this war and his conception of geopolitical realities:

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[47]Joseph Pulitzer II to Coghlan, 26 Dec. 1944; 17 Aug. 1944.

[48]Joseph Pulitzer II to Raymond P. Brandt, 16 Nov. 1945, quoting telegram to Eisenhower.

[49]*Ibid.*

[50]Joseph Pulitzer II to Lindsay Hoben, 18 June 1945.

[51]Joseph Pulitzer II to Gottlieb, 5 June 1945.

> Of course, we favor liberty and independence as a principle for all people everywhere, BUT – until the Golden Age and Brave New World arrive – is it not the ugly fact that liberty can be gained and preserved only by force of arms? How did we gain and preserve our American independence? Was it not by licking the British in 1778 and 1812? What will produce and preserve Philippine independence? Is it not the American Navy and Air Force? What degree of "independence," if any, can Poland look forward to? In the last analysis will not the Russian army settle that question? What about independence for the unfortunate Syrians? Sooner or later...will they not have to look either to British arms, Russian arms or French arms for their so-called "independence"?
>
> This is by no means to say that we should not continue to do our damndest to bring about a world peace organization. But are we not kidding ourselves when we think that under that peace structure "enlightened self-interest" will not continue to be the first motive of the Big Four? Are we going to let Russia tell us what kind of government Columbia or Panama or Mexico should have? I doubt it. I don't see how we can get away from "zones of influence" and in the last analysis, I cannot escape the conclusion that independence for the Puerto Ricans or Newfoundlanders or the Hottentots must depend on forces somehow, somewhere and that the best we can hope for is that the abuse of that force will be restrained by the peace organization. How about it?[52]

Pulitzer had come, in short, from his belief in neutrality and isolation in 1938 to what seemed to him by 1945 a need to recognize new realities in the search for global order. In the main, it appears that his reading of events in Europe rather quickly extinguished his hope that the United States could stay out of the war. It seems probable that he would have been more forcefully for intervention earlier than he was had it not been for the resistance of his managing and editorial page editors and the general public's support for isolation so clearly shown in the response to the editorial "To the Brink." Once beyond that, however, Pulitzer led a largely cooperative *Post-Dispatch* effort to explain and support the country's war aims.

[52]Joseph Pulitzer II to Gottlieb, 4 June 1945.

W. A. Scott and the Atlanta *World*

By Leonard Ray Teel*

The founding of the Atlanta *World* in 1928 was the result of one man's vision, will, and salesmanship. To bankroll his newspaper, William Alexander Scott II marshaled his collegiate debate skills to persuade a banker to risk thousands of dollars on an enterprise that seemed to have little chance of success – a newspaper owned, managed, and controlled by blacks. A short time later, the banker confessed his astonishment as he witnessed the little newspaper prosper on advertising revenue. W. A. Scott paid back every cent, and within two years, the *World* increased its tempo to twice a week, then three times. Meanwhile, Scott flexed his persuasive muscle across the Southeast, establishing in 1931 a cooperative syndicate of weekly black-owned newspapers. As a crowning achievement in 1932, he turned the *World* into a daily. On Monday morning, March 14, 1932, the Atlanta *World* introduced itself as "the only daily newspaper published anywhere in the world by Negroes." As a daily it was struggling against great odds. Its life expectancy was no more than five years, the longest any black daily had survived.[1]

The *World* succeeded largely because it was founded as a business venture, not a political experiment. Although Scott believed the *World* could become an important, independent black voice, he focused his energies first upon creating a healthy financial venture.

W. A. Scott was only 26 years old when he launched the weekly and 29 when he started the daily. His remarkable success was based on his persuasive salesmanship, honed by his years on the debate team at Atlanta's Morehouse College, and on his recognition that black com-

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[1] In 1989, the *World* was publishing four days a week, enough to qualify as a daily newspaper. For an overview of the black press before 1928, see Alfred McClung Lee, *The Daily Newspaper in America: The Evolution of a Social Instrument* (New York, 1937), 177.

merce was expanding as Atlanta grew into a regional marketing center. He envisioned an ever-widening market for advertising, beginning with black businessmen and expanding to capture a share of national corporate advertising for his syndicate. Even after 1929, he was able to persuade his bankers that, despite the Depression, he could build a profitable advertising base – locally and nationally.

Scott offered the *World* as a parallel market for white advertisers who also used the Atlanta *Journal* and Atlanta *Constitution* and the Hearst-owned *Georgian*. The *World* billed itself as a way to reach Atlanta's "90,000 Negroes."[2] His advertising strategy called for frequent house advertisements that urged blacks to "buy from *World* advertisers" because "$1 does double duty." The ad reminded blacks that they could purchase standard merchandise from *World* advertisers, an act which "brings back money to Negro pockets."[3]

To broaden his advertising base, Scott created a syndicate across the South. It was a brilliant innovation. Using the success of the *World* as a beacon for other black editors, he banded them together in a cooperative Southern syndicate of black-owned newspapers.[4] With the syndicate in place as a market for advertising, Scott could convert the *World* to a daily.

In the first issue, the *World*'s editors proclaimed the birth in a front-page editorial, "Your World Now Daily." The managing editor, Frank Marshall Davis, printed his editorial birth announcement beneath four banner headlines for news stories about Lindbergh kidnap suspects, black voter registration, the death penalty sought for a black man, and a fatal auto accident. In the editorial, Davis declared, "When the press of the Atlanta *World* today turned out the first edition of the only daily newspaper published anywhere in the world by Negroes, it marked still another epoch in this race's journalistic endeavors...the supreme achievement of Negro journalism – a daily newspaper."[5]

No one was prouder of the "supreme achievement" than young W. A. Scott. At only 29, he was the *World*'s founder, publisher, and editor,

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[2][House Advertisement], Atlanta *World*, July 29, 1932, p. 7.

[3][House ad], Atlanta World, July 26, 1932, p.1.

[4]The Southern Newspaper Syndicate was renamed the Scott Newspaper Syndicate in 1933 after non-Southern publishers joined. By 1933 the syndicate's letterhead advertised 50 newspapers, including an Indian tribal weekly in Oklahoma, the Okmulgee voice of *Nation*. Among the 50 were four semi-weeklies, the St. Louis *World* and the Texas *World* in Highland park, and two owned by Scott, the Birmingham *World* and the Memphis *World*. The other 46 papers were weeklies, published in Little Rock, Asheville, Athens (Ga.), Austin, Brunswick (Ga.), Charlotte, Kingston (N.C.), Wilmington (N.C.), Chattanooga, Cincinatti, Clarksdale (Miss.), Cleveland, Columbia (S.C.), Columbus (Ohio), Detroit, Durham (N.C.), Danville (Va.), Evanston (Ill.), Forth Worth, Gadsden (Ala.), Hopkinsville (Ky.), Hannibal (Mo.), Huntington (W. Va.), Des Moines, Jackson (Tenn.), Jacksonville (Fla.), Lexington (Ky.), Reidsville, (N.C.), New Orleans, Shreveport, Miami, Mobile, Montgomery, Nashville, New Bern (N.C.), St. Petersburg, Florence (S.C.), Richmond (Ky.), Roanoke, Spartanburg (S.C.), Frogmore (S.C.), Tampa, Greensboro (N.C.), Tuscaloosa (Ala.), and West Palm Beach.

[5] Frank Marshall Davis, "Your World Now Daily," Atlanta *World*, March 14, 1932, 1.

a dominant force in Atlanta's black community.

The publishing of a daily newspaper represented the flowering of Scott's considerable talent and ambition. Born September 29, 1902, in Edwards, Mississippi, the second of nine children, he had learned the fundamentals of printing from his mother, Emeline Southall Scott. Scott's father, William Alexander Scott Sr., a Christian Church minister, had bought a printing shop from a retiring printer who, as part of the transaction, taught Mrs. Scott to set type and to print Rev. Scott's church's publications. Mrs. Scott, in turn, taught her son.

At college, Scott developed the other talents that made him a superb persuader. At Jackson College in Mississippi from 1920 to 1922 and at Morehouse College in Atlanta from 1923 to 1925, he studied business and mathematics. At Morehouse he found outlets for his competitive spirit and physical energy. He worked on the Morehouse yearbook and was quarterback of the Morehouse Tigers football team. Along with his oldest brother, Aurelius, his constant companion at Morehouse, Scott demonstrated intellectual combativeness as a champion debater on the Morehouse team.

Debate sharpened Scott's persuasiveness into a tool for salesmanship. A colleague at the *World* afterwards recalled the "competitive fire" that characterized Scott "whatever the issue: college debating, tennis, quarter-backing a college football team, Spanish checkers, speeding in high-priced cars, piano-playing, billiards and/or the art of earning fabulous sums of money."[6] "He was a continuously active person," recalls his son, William A. Scott III. "His goal was always to do the seemingly impossible."[7]

Scott left Morehouse in 1925 without graduating. He began to earn a paycheck as a teacher and dean of boys at Swift College in Knoxville. After a year he left that position and went to Birmingham, where he worked for several months as a sales representative for the Real Silk Hosiery Company and later the Better Brush Company. By 1927 he was in Jacksonville, Florida, working as a railway mail clerk on the Jacksonville-to-Miami run. In Jacksonville early in 1927, at the age of twenty-four, he started his first independent enterprise, combining his skills in sales and his knowledge of printing. With himself as business manager and assisted by his brother Aurelius, he published the black community's first *City Directory of Negro Business*.[8]

Scott's timing was propitious. As in other Southern cities, Jacksonville had a sharp increase in population during the 1920s. Blacks in large numbers were emigrating from the rural areas to the cities of the

[6] Ric Roberts, "A PeerlesS Competitor Planned Newspaper War, But He Died at 31, on Battle's Eve," Pittsburgh *Courier* Magazine, October 1, 1955, 2.

[7] Interview with W.A. Scott III, April 27, 1988.

[8] "Obituary of William Alexander Scott," Atlanta *World*, Feb. 12, 1934, 6.

South – many of them only stopping off on their way to the cities of the North. The new black population in the Southern cities created a booming market for goods and services, "and black business districts sprang up to help serve this growing population."[9]

Scott's city directory for black businesses and services would be paid for by advertising. Although whites had advertised in directories for years, Scott was breaking new ground by introducing the concept to the black community. It required an articulate salesman to persuade merchants and professionals to advertise in the new venture. For various reasons, many black entrepreneurs had never before paid to publish an advertisement. A study completed a decade earlier for Atlanta University had noted "the failure of the average Negro business man to make any attempt to advertise his business properly. The average Negro business man, especially in small towns, seems to take it for granted that everyone knows that he is in business and will consequently come around to see him."[10]

In his office at 2002 Louisiana Street, Scott devoted himself to finish the project by the spring of 1927. Contracting with a reliable printing house, he had the directory published by May. On Mother's Day he wrote his mother, "I am resting from a grind of about six weeks which I went through to get out the *Directory* which Aurelius told you about (Will mail one soon)." The accomplishment cheered him so much that he said he was in "better health, happier, and with a better outlook on life than ever before."[11]

While he and Aurelius were developing this enterprise, Scott was living apart from his wife, Lucile. In 1927, she and their two sons, William Alexander III, 5, and Robert, 3, stayed at her father's home in Shreveport, Mississippi. Separation was to be the pattern for most of their married life. William and Lucile had met in high school in Jackson. Her father was also a clergyman, a minister in the Christ Temple Holyness [sic] Church. William and Lucile married on June 22, 1922, when he was 20 and a sophomore at Jackson College.[12] But he was too motivated to settle down in Jackson. Shortly after their first son was born on January 15, 1923, Scott left with Aurelius to enter Morehouse. As time allowed, Scott made the trip by car or train to visit his wife and son. Their second son was born September 10, 1924. The first child, William, was four years old when his father took the family on an

[9] During the 1920s, economic hard times and the devastation of cotton crops by the boll weevil blight spurred a migration from the rural South that was greater than the migration during World War I. John Ditmer, *Black Georgia in the Progressive Era, 1900-1920* (Urbana, Ill., 1977), 210.

[10] Asa H. Gordon, *The Georgia Negro: A History* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1937); rpt. (Spartanburg, S.C., 1972), 260.

[11] W.A. Scott, Jr. [III], to Mrs. W.A. Scott [Sr.], May 5, 1927, Scott Family Papers, Atlanta *Daily World* office, Atlanta, Ga. [Cited hereafter as Scott Papers]

[12] Interview with Lucile Scott, April 29, 1988, Atlanta.

auto trip in Florida. William recalls an outing on the beach at Jacksonville:

> Late in he evening as the tide was coming in, the car got stuck in the sand. You know how water comes in and sand sinks. And a young white person on the beach got my father's car out of the sand. He knew how to do it. Well, I can remember my father, after watching him get the car out, he put the car back in the sand and got it out himself. That was his way. He said, "If this guy can do it, I can do it." And he watched him and he did it. He got it out.[13]

The success of the Jacksonville *Directory* demonstrated that Scott could make an income from advertising and publishing. He had the formula: persuade black entrepreneurs that they could compete for customers and clients – or lose them to white businesses. Often, he had to overcome the merchants' tendency to think that blacks would automatically patronize black businesses. Asa Gorden noted in the 1930s,

> It is held by some that prejudice in the South aids Negro business in that it forces colored people to trade more and more among themselves. This seems to be only partly true, since it is not universally true that we find the successful businesses in the most prejudiced places.[14]

In any case, Scott urged black economic solidarity, urging blacks to be loyal to merchants who advertised in his black publications. Later, his *World* routinely carried the dictum: "Stores that advertise in the *World* want your trade – Patronize them."[15]

Within months after the Jacksonville *Directory* came out, Scott returned to Atlanta with the intention of publishing a directory of Atlanta's black business community. In Atlanta, as in Jacksonville, several forces were at work to encourage Scott in his new career. The migration from the rural areas had increased the black population, which crowded into the segregated neighborhoods. A second propitious trend continuing since 1900 was the increase in the number of black industrial workers, professionals, and businessmen. A third development important for publishing was the increase in the numbers of blacks who could read. One historian of blacks in the South, John Ditmer, concluded that Georgia's black schools, while still inadequate, had improved notably during the first twenty years of the century "particularly in the cities,

[13] Interview , W.A. Scott III, April 27, 1988.
[14] Gordon, *Georgia Negro*, 264.
[15] Atlanta *World*, Dec. 2, 1931, 8.

and the illiteracy rate hit a new low."[16] Literacy was even greater among Atlanta's blacks because the city had become a major black educational center of the Deep South with a black middle class that ranked among the nation's largest.[17]

Finally, Atlanta in the 1920s became a center of opportunity for blacks. As "a major city with a somewhat fluid system of race relations and older black elite that was gradually losing its power, Atlanta attracted a number of aspiring young black men seeking careers in the New South."[18]

Atlanta was like home to Scott. He was soon in consultation with friends, many of them Morehouse College alumni, about his ideas for the directory. With the Jacksonville *Directory* as evidence, he began canvassing among black businessmen and professionals. As one contemporary put it, he arrived in Atlanta with only "his hat in his hand and a big idea in his head."[19]

Scott's career soon accelerated. Rather than hire a contract printer, he took advantage of an opportunity to set himself up as a printer. On learning that the printers who put out the *Baptist Review* were going out of business, Scott arranged to rent their printing office and equipment. At the same time, to guarantee at least one client, he contracted to publish the *Review*, a publication of the General Missionary Baptist Convention of Georgia.[20] For money to go into business, he secured the first of many loans from the black-owned Citizens Trust Company.[21]

He soon learned, probably through the bank officers, that the bankrupt Standard Life Insurance Co., then in receivership, owned printing equipment which was for scale. He decided to buy the equipment and become his own publisher. Rather than move the equipment, Scott contracted to rent the Standard's Office space, at 210 Auburn Avenue, in the same building with the Citizen's Trust Company. Not only did he not have to move the press, he gained a fashionable address on "Sweet Auburn" in the heart of Atlanta's established business district. There, early in 1928, he was publishing his directory and looking around for the next city with enough advertisers to support a directory and keep his press turning.

Augusta's black business community seemed a likely market for Scott's next city directory. But before he could leave Atlanta, his

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[16] Ditmer, *Black Georgia*, 210. By 1920 almost one of every four Georgia blacks lived in cities.

[17] Alton Hornsby Jr., "Georgia," in *The Black Press in the South, 1865-1979*, ed. by Henry Lewis Suggs (Westport, Conn., 1983), 135.

[18] John M. Matthews, "Black Newspapermen and the Black Community in Georgia," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, 68 (Fall 1984), 365.

[19] E.N. Davis, "Snow and Rain Fail to Deter Crowd from Paying Last Respects to *World*'s Publisher; Hundreds Throng Wheat Street Church Sunday Despite Bad Weather," Atlanta *World*, Feb. 12, 1934, 6.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

friends persuaded him to stay. Among his circle of business associates was an Atlanta executive with the Afro-American Insurance Company, W. C. Kelly. Kelly, who eventually became the Atlanta *World*'s circulation manager, recalled the day in 1928 when Scott "came to my office and told me that he was going to Augusta to publish an annual. I told him that it would be a good idea to stay in Atlanta and print a weekly paper. I thought no more about it until that Friday when W. A. came into my office with the first copy of the Atlanta *World*!"[22]

A few influential blacks tried to dissuade Scott from starting a newspaper. Among them was Dr. D. D. Crawford, executive secretary of the General Missionary Baptist Convention of Georgia, whose *Review* Scott was printing. Scott, accompanied by a younger brother, Cornelius A. Scott, visited Crawford. "[They] told me of their plans. I told them frankly, 'You'll fail.' I told Milton the same thing."[23]

L.D. Milton was the most important voice of discouragement. He was Scott's banker at the Citizens Trust Company. He had been a professor at Morehouse, where he met Scott. Although he trusted Scott's talent, he remained pessimistic about the prospects of a weekly newspaper for blacks. In 1934, at Scott's funeral, Milton recalled, "I fought him, I warned him, I coaxed him. We were friends. He is the one who gives me the courage to tell my students that it can be done. Don't be afraid. Try it." Over a period of five years, Milton revealed, "the Citizens [Trust Bank] has loaned W. A. Scott thousands of dollars on nothing other than his mere word. There he lies in death, indebted to us not one red cent!"[24]

In warning Scott, Milton was concerned about the lack of lucrative, national advertising. The failure of black newspapers was commonplace, and the lack of high-income advertising was frequently cited as the main cause. The Swedish sociologist Gunnar Myrdal referred to this "paucity of advertising" which "makes the economy of a Negro newspaper precarious."[25] Until World War II, the difficulty in securing *national* advertising thwarted the development of black newspapers. Black scholars noted that half or more of the advertising in the black press touted "hair straighteners, skin bleachers, patent medicines and the like."[26] Forewarned, Scott's ready answer was his proven track record in selling advertising.

In 1928 as before, Scott's timing was fortunate. Atlanta's only black weekly newspaper, the *Independent*, was in decline and presented lit-

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[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New York, 1944), 922.

[26] Jessie Parkhurst Guzman, ed., *Negro Year Book, 1941-46* (Tuskegee, Ala., 1947), 390.

tle competition. Its editor, Benjamin Jefferson Davis, had founded the paper in 1903 and made it a partisan champion of the rights of black people. But Davis was as much a volatile politician as a journalist, and his paper became a vehicle for his political views. In the 1920s, he became entangled in Republican party politics, challenging state Republican leadership, and in 1928 served as a national Republican committeeman. That was the pinnacle of his political career. In 1929 he was deposed, presumably because his factional infighting had created too many enemies. Davis' "brand of personal, partisan journalism was doomed," concludes one historian of the black press.[27] The *Independent* suffered from his preoccupation with politics. "His loss of the post of national committeeman was followed by the eclipse of the Republican Party nationally after the elections of 1932. The *Independent* failed in 1933, an indication that its very existence depended on the party."[28]

In 1928, Scott was well aware of the *Independent*'s problems and of the opportunity those difficulties presented. Ric Roberts, whose career in the black press would soon begin at the *World*, recalled the day in 1928 when Scott came into Yates and Milton, the drug store with the most popular soda fountain on Auburn Avenue. "I thought he was a peculiar sort of fellow. He seemed to be brooding all the time...like a man contemplating some impending and serious event. This particular afternoon he wore a smile and I was completely awed." As Roberts recalled,

> He walked to me and spoke enthusiastically.
>
> "Say, Ric, I'm going to print a newspaper. Ben Davis' *Independent* seems on the downgrade. The time is ripe for a paper in this town."
>
> I told him I thought it was an idea, but wanted to know from what source the money would come.
>
> "I don't need a lot of money. It will be a healthier way to start. I won't waste money. I'll use just enough to get going and then I'll work and work and work. See? Now you make me up some headings and things and I'll pay you just as soon as possible."
>
> ...In two weeks the *World* was in full swing.[29]

Scott understood the lessons to be learned from the *Independent*'s decline and he resolved that his weekly would not be primarily a political journal. Scott would steer away from a preoccupation with politics and especially avoid partisan leanings. "He was nonpartisan," his son William explained. "He said the quickest way to hurt a publica-

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[27] Matthews, "Black Newspapermen," 365, 371, 379.

[28] Ibid., 379.

[29] Ric Roberts, "W.A. Scott – The Man," Atlanta *World*, Feb. 11, 1934, 6.

tion was to become partisan."[30] By comparison with the *Independent*, Georgia historian John Matthews notes, the *World* "was quite circumspect in tone and the Scott family far less visible and politically partisan."[31] In declining to affiliate with a party, Scott deviated from the norm in the lower South. As historian Henry Lewis Suggs notes, the black press since Reconstruction generally supported the Republican party.[32]

In distancing his newspaper from political partisanship, Scott did not intend to dilute his influence on politics. In his own mind, he may have thought that a nonpartisan stance might increase his influence on matters of importance to his race. In years to come, his paper would join the crusade against police brutality, lynchings, and capital punishment. Yet the *World*'s political outlook, while forceful on black issues, did not feature Scott as a dominant political leader. The voice of protest was attributed to the newspaper rather than Scott.

Yet he did not intend the *World* as a vehicle primarily for protest. As a businessman whose first interest was in building the *World*, Scott was sensitive to his market. He anticipated what the readers would want – evenhanded coverage of the black community, not overloaded with news of political protest. Four years after Scott launched the weekly, his managing editor reminded readers that the newspaper "has attempted to give all the news worthwhile and serve the best interests of the community in a sane and sensible manner."[33]

In planning the weekly newspaper, Scott had a number of models to study. In the century since the beginnings of the black press with *Freedom's Journal* in 1827, several generations of black weeklies had appeared, some surviving for decades. Since 1900, some had thrived because, in addition to championing civil rights for blacks, they offered a variety of coverage of black life, much of which the dominant white press overlooked – news, features, society and religious news, entertainment, and sports. By the 1920s, some of the pace-setting black weeklies were the Chicago *Defender*, founded in 1905, the Pittsburgh *Courier*, begun in 1910, and the Norfolk *Journal and Guide*, also started in 1910.[34]

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[30] Interview, W.A. Scott III, May 9, 1988.

[31] Matthews, "Black Newspapermen," 370, 380.

[32] Suggs, *Black Press*, 4.

[33] Davis, "Your World Now Daily," 1.

[34] The black press took many of its cues from the dominant white press. This was true of the handling of news and sports. The *Defender*, founded and published by Robert S. Abbott, and the *Courier*, developed by Robert S. Vann, offered a sensational treatment of news, including a steady stream of crime stories. In cases when white press coverage was unsatisfactory, the black press often published its own version, "race-angled" for its ownreaders, as in the coverage of race riots, and crimes by whites against blacks. Both papers published editorials on behalf of their readers. See Roland E. Wolseley, *The Black Press, U.S.A.* (Ames, Iowa, 1971), 36, 38, 49. Both newspapers also devoted considerable space to news of black society, culture, and fashion, through which they appealed "to the awakened imagination of Negroes in urban communities [and] provides a romantic escape for Negro

In Atlanta, Scott had his own priorities for content, including news about religious, social, and educational activities. Having grown up in the shadow of his father's ministry, he understood the cohesive role of the church in the life of the black community. Weekly publication of church news would give the newspaper respectability and readers. In carrying out this policy Scott became known as a believer in the "strength, importance and necessity for a strong church group."[35] Similarly, his insistence on reporting the black community's club events, social news and college notices – which the dominant white press ignored – secured another core of readers and at the same time mirrored the social mobility of blacks.

In any consideration of content, Scott understood that the *World* would find its niche if it supplied black readers with what was missing from the white press. In this sense, it would be typical of other black newspapers in the United States, most of which were published as "second papers" for most blacks, who also read the white newspapers in their communities. Myrdal cited this trend in the 1940s when he concluded, "The Negro papers, therefore, largely supplement the ordinary papers with Negro news and opinions."[36]

All considerations, however, depended upon Scott's projections for significant, high-income advertising. The Morehouse College historian, Alton Hornsby, notes that the *World* was "founded primarily as a business venture."[37] With his experience in sales, Scott wanted to revolutionize the traditional financial base of the black press. As scholars have observed, the black publications' high attrition rate was largely because revenue depended more on circulation than on advertising.[38] In Scott's publishing scheme, the advertising revenue would be a far greater proportion of the income from the beginning. As it happened, advertising paid most of the bills and permitted expansion. Scott avoided the plight of typically undercapitalized black-owned newspapers which died young or limped along with only subsistence income from small, local advertisers.

For a model to emulate, he had the weekly Savannah *Tribune*, started in 1875 and still viable in the 1920s. The *Tribune* survived its early years by a combination of advertisements in the black community and a persistent "appeal for continued support."[39] In time, the *Tribune* diversified its advertisements. In the beginning, it relied on grocery stores, liquor stores, boot and shoe makers, bars, and restaurants, most in

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city-dwellers." See E. Franklin Frazier, *Black Bourgeoisie* (New York, 957), 146.

[35] "Files Show W.A. Scott as Friend of Churches," Atlanta *World*, February 1932, n.p.

[36] Myrdal, *Dilemma*, 915.

[37] Hornsby, "Georgia," 131.

[38] Ibid., 120; Wolseley, *Black Press*, 39.

[39] Hornsby, "Georgia," 120.

the black community. Within two decades, the *Tribune* had expanded to advertise carpet and furniture stores, and black colleges and universities. It also accepted advertisements for miracle medicines such as "'cure-all pills,' which were guaranteed to cure opium and morphine habits in 10 to 20 days" or the reader paid nothing.[40] Other ads typical of the black press publicized hair straighteners, skin color potions, magic symbols, and sex books.[41]

Scott's initial advertisers included a number of businesses in the black community – new accounts, in addition to many he had earlier persuaded to advertise in the directory of black businesses. His strategy included an appeal by the *World* to black residents to support black businesses. "Buy From World Advertisers," Scott's front-page ad declared. This, the ad explained, made each dollar do "double duty" – the purchaser would receive "standard merchandise" *and* by doing business in the black community "brings back money to Negro pockets."[42] The *World*'s clients in the black community included its banker, the black-owned Citizens Trust Bank, which had most of the front of the building at 210 Auburn Avenue where the *World* set up shop in the rear. Others were Holloway's jewelry store at 178 Auburn Avenue, the realtors of Cunningham, Alexander and Callaway, a funeral home, and a haberdashery.

To stimulate interest in advertising, Scott followed the lead of successful big-city newspapers in sponsoring community promotions and offering free design services to potential advertisers. A typical promotion was "Better Home Week," advertised with a front-page banner across eight columns, promising "free prizes by the *World* and local merchants."[43] Toward Christmas, in-house ads coaxed potential clients, telling them that the *World* advertising staff was "equipped to supply advertisers with sparkling new seasonal illustrations covering every line of business. Layout and copy suggestions, too, for the advertiser who wants distinctive displays....No extra charge for this service."[44]

Scott also sold ads to Atlanta's white merchants, who were already profiting from black patronage. Here his strategy was to advertise the *World* as the only vehicle for reaching Atlanta's "90,000 Negroes."[45] Such language helped counter the belief generally held by white advertisers that advertising in black newspapers was a wasteful duplication because most blacks also read white publications.[46] These

[40] Ibid.

[41] Wolseley, *Black Press*, 39.

[42] Atlanta *World*, July 26, 1932, 1.

[43] Ibid., Dec. 1, 1931, 1.

[44] Ibid., Dec. 11, 1931, 7.

[45] Ibid., July 29, 1932, 7.

[46] Mary Alice Sentman and Patrick S. Washburn, "How [the] Excess Profits Tax Brought Ads to Black Newspaper[s] in World War II, *Journalism Quarterly* 64 (1987): 770.

white advertisers included the A&P supermarket, Rich's downtown department store, automobile dealerships, clothiers, and furniture stores.

In addition, the *World* soon gained a share of national advertising, partly because of the appeal of its syndicate. Its success in gaining national revenues went counter to the trend for black newspapers in the 1930s. Before the 1940s, researchers note, the black press as a whole had been unable to attract much national advertising.[47] Nonetheless, the national advertising agents, W.B. Ziff in Chicago and New York, achieved some success in obtaining national advertisements. As the *World* grew, it hired the Ziff firm as its agents.[48] In his first years, Scott secured accounts with the Atlanta-based Coca-Cola Company, Sears, Kinney's shoes, Kraft Foods, and the Seaboard Railroad, as well as with national liquor distillers and cosmetics firms. Another steady account was Vaseline, then used for keeping hair in place and moistening chapped lips.

Such success had been a long time in the making. On August 3, 1928, when the first issue of the weekly Atlanta *World* came off the old insurance company press, the paper consisted of four pages and cost five cents. The copy which Scott proudly carried to the insurance office of W.C. Kelly was well received by the black business community, which tended to be forgiving of the small initial circulation – not yet 2,000 – and the imperfect printing and editing.[49] "There it was all right," Kelly recalled the first issue of the weekly. "Some of the lines were upside down, but the Atlanta *World* had started."[50]

Scott was succeeding with his strategy of basing the publishing venture on advertising revenue rather than on circulation, but the *World* was as yet only a limited and qualified success. Energetic and expansionist, Scott envisioned multiplying the newspaper's frequency, circulation, and appeal to the black middle class, thus increasing both the base charge for advertising and the number and quality of national advertisers. The expansion plans met resistance at the Citizens Trust Company, where Milton and Scott had become friends, but not the kind of friends, Milton later recalled, "who pat you on the back and tell you that you are the greatest man in the world. We seldom agreed on anything much of the time, but we did agree on principles."[51]

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[47] Sentman and Washburn, "Excess Profits Tax," 773. Sentman and Washburn note that the World War II Excess Profits Tax and subsequent tax rulings permitting "generous" advertising deductions from the tax, encourage companies to spend "excess profits" on advertising in the black press rather than surrender the excess profits to the IRS. "Given this incentive," Sentman and Washburn observe, "the black press, formerly considered inconsequential or a duplication by many national advertisers, became an attractive supplementary advertising vehicle."

[48] Interview with W.A. Scott III, May 9, 1988.

[49] Interview with W.A.Scott III, April 27, 1988.

[50] Davis, "Snow and Rain," 6.

[51] Ibid.

In less than five years, with continued financing laced with warnings from Milton at the Citizens Trust Company, Scott carried out the expansion completely. He might have acted even more swiftly but for the stock market crash in 1929 and the subsequent restraint in the business community. Still, by 1930, he had survived with a strong enough base to publish the *World* twice a week, which required more employees. He then increased the base for national advertising by establishing two other semi-weeklies, the Birmingham *World* and the Memphis *World*.

One of Scott's most ingenious schemes was the building of the syndicate of black-owned newspapers. Certain that national advertisers would respond favorably to a regional audience, Scott started working on a plan to link black-owned newspapers across the South, a combination of weeklies and semi-weeklies. To this end he spent much of 1930 traveling and persuading local black businessmen and publishers to sign printing contracts with the *World*. He drove his car as far west as Arkansas and Texas, as far north as Virginia. His son William speculates that in establishing the syndicate Scott was led on by the instinct of "dead reckoning" and "came up and matured at the time that Lindbergh flew to Paris. He didn't know he was dead on course, but he knew it was in that direction and he just focused on that direction. It's dead reckoning – it's inexplicable ability to go from one point to another without absolute mechanical capability to get to that point, other than you're just doing it."[52]

On January 1, 1931, Scott launched his Southern Newspaper Syndicate. It was the first such independent group of publishers of black newspapers. Created as a cooperative venture to build Scott's advertising base, the syndicate claimed a circulation – and coverage area – equivalent to the total of all syndicate members. Geographically, the coverage at first was limited to nine Southern states from North Carolina to Arkansas.[53] But Scott, focused on potential as usual, believed that success would attract other publishers beyond the South.

Under the printing agreements, Scott and the syndicate members benefitted mutually and separately. For some publishers, the syndicate offered the only means to sustain a weekly newspaper. Central to the syndicate was the agreement for sharing advertising revenue. The *World* would keep all income from national advertising contained in its national pages, which were inserted in all the local newspapers. The local newspapers would keep all revenue from local advertising, and revenue from local circulation sales.

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[52] Interview, W.A. Scott III, April 27, 1988.

[53] W.A. Scott to Mrs. Lucile [sic] Scott, April 26, 1932. Scott Papers. The syndicate member states in April 1932 included North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Arkansas, and Louisiana.

The syndicate enabled owners to publish a local weekly or semi-weekly paper by mailing local news and advertising to Atlanta on the trains, thus cutting enormously the cost of production. By agreement, the *World* did all the printing of member newspapers and shipped the papers efficiently and inexpensively by scheduled trains.[54] The local newspapers all contained the national edition of the *World*, inserted. In Atlanta, the increasing printing business required the *World* to hire more employees and linotype machines and to operate around-the-clock.

Another cooperative aspect was the pooling of news stories among all the member papers. As Scott had envisioned, the success of the venture brought in more members in other Southern states and some outside the South in Ohio, Iowa, and Oklahoma. In early 1933, he would change the name to the Scott Newspaper Syndicate, Inc. By November 1933 there would be forty-nine members, including Scott's three *World* papers.

With the growth of the syndicate in 1931, Scott turned to his vision of a daily that would establish his credibility among newspaper publishers. In April 1931, he took the next step and converted all three *World*s into three-times-a-week newspapers. That summer he improved the quality of the Atlanta paper by introducing the *Gravure Weekly*, which his stationery proclaimed as the "Only Negro Rotogravure Sheet." After eleven months of stabilizing the production of the thrice-weekly *World*, Scott was ready to unveil his daily. He did that in two stages, ushering in the six-day daily on March 14, 1932, and, six weeks later, adding the Saturday paper.

The front page of Scott's first daily issue was typical of his news coverage. All of the stories involved blacks, locally or nationally, and concerned politics, crime, criminal justice, and middle-class leaders prominent in religious, education, and social circles. On the newspaper's logo, between *Atlanta* and *World*, an eagle spread its wings behind the world's two hemispheres, beneath which was printed: "Dixie's Standard Race Journal."[55] Later on, Scott would substitute for that regional promotion one with global pride: "Only Negro Daily Newspaper in the World" and replace the eagle with a black face. Although the newspaper's promotional headlines often referred to itself as the *Daily World*, the word *Daily* was not part of its logo until years later.

In the first issue, the main political story reported that more than 2,000 blacks had registered to vote in an election to recall the Atlanta mayor, James L. Key. "That most of the Race voters of Atlanta were backing Mayor Key in his fight to retain his office was disclosed Mon-

[54] Interview with C.A. Scott, editor and general manager, brother of W.A. Scott II, Jan. 15, 1985; interviews with W.A. Scott III, son of W.A. Scott II, Jan 15, 1985, and April 27, 1988.

[55] Atlanta *World*, March 14, 1932, 1.

day following a survey made by *World* reporters of registered voters."[56] The objectivity of the "survey" was questionable. Directly beneath that story, the *World* both instructed voters to register immediately and told them how to vote – "Vote 'Against' the recall of Mayor Key and not 'For'. Read ballot carefully before marking."[57]

Stories about crime and criminal justice were routine in the *World* as in other newspapers, black or white. A sensational national crime story reporting that Negroes were no longer suspected in the kidnapping of Charles A. Lindbergh's infant son was advertised with a banner headline atop the newspaper's logo. That story out of New York City and attributed to Scott's S.N.S. (Southern Newspaper Syndicate) Press Service reflected the newspaper's proclaimed stance for racial justice:

> Clues involving Negroes in the now famous and baffling Lindbergh kidnapping case have so far been found to be groundless.
>
> And yet these same clues have brought into suspicion nearly a dozen Negroes of Pennsylvania, New York and Missouri.[58]

One of the banner headlines noted an imminent criminal trial in which the state might ask for the death penalty for both a white and a black man.[59]

The front page also carried stories and obituaries about noted black citizens. At one of Nashville's black universities, Fisk, the administration had given an honorary doctor of music degree to the black tenor Roland Hayes. In Atlanta at the Bethel A.M.E. Church, next door to the *World* offices, nine Ancient, Free, and Accepted Masons orated for five minutes each in tribute to their late Grand Master, Dr. H.R. Butler Sr., who had died that week. Typical of most newspapers, the *World* balanced the front page with a "brite" under the headline, "Corpse Rises So Mourners Scram."[60]

The editorial page reflected the newspaper's stance as a voice of protest for criminal justice and civil rights. In its editorials, the *World* resembled the typical black newspaper, which Myrdal classified as "a fighting press" which is "far more than a mere expression of the Negro protest. By expressing the protest, the press also magnifies it, acting like a huge sounding board."[61]

On March 14, 1932, the first daily editorial criticized the state and

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56 "2,000 Register for Vote on Key; Sentiment Here Is Favorable to Mayor," Atlanta *World*, March 14, 1932, 1.

57 "Voter's Instructions in Recall Election," Atlanta *World*, March 14, 1932, 1.

58 "Negro Clues Prove False in Lindy Case; Many Clues Involve Negroes; Radio Message Sent in Philly to Pick Up 3 and Baby," Atlanta *World*, March 14, 1932, 1.

59 Ibid.

60 Ibid.

61 Myrdal, *Dilemma*, 908, 911.

the region for "legal lynching" – for sentencing a disproportionate numbers of blacks to the electric chair. The editors noted that unequal administration of justice could

> foster the cause of Communism....What people can respect a system of government which kills Negroes for stealing a half a dollar yet frees a white who has feloniously assaulted a black man helpless in jail?
>
> Not only do such atrocities in the name of law and order create a disrespect and foment bitterness among those who suffer, but they widen the breach between the races by impressing many whites with the cheapness of Negro life and indicate killings by individuals may be sanctioned if they are to take the state as a criterion.
>
> When the South realizes that legal lynchings cure no crime, a large percentage of the battle for interracial understanding will have been won.[62]

Sometimes the *World* blended its fighting stance with its promotional instincts. Later in 1932, the editors launched a grassroots campaign to raise money for the Supreme Court defense of the nine black youths convicted in 1931 in the Scottsboro case. In an editorial headed "Nine Lives for Ten Cents," it noted with hyperbole,

> Just ten cents from every one of the 90,000 Negroes in Atlanta alone would bring in 9,000 [for] the defense fund.
>
> Are the lives of nine boys of our race – some of whom have relatives in Atlanta - worth a dime to you?
>
> If not, then you do not belong within the circle of freed men and are fit only for the segregation, discrimination and legal injustice heaped upon the race. And, in that case, the whites have every right to call the Negro a black beast from the jungle.[63]

Appeals for support were typical of the *World*. In that first issue in March 1932, the second editorial, "Your World Now Daily," continued from page one, asked for community support for the newspaper itself. It made Scott's publication a point of pride for the black race and worthy of support. Praising Scott's achievement at "just 29," managing editor Frank Marshall Davis, noted,

> All he had was the will to succeed and a generous supply of common sense. Today you see the result of this combination – the most stupendous journalistic achievement yet known to Negroes. From his

62 "Georgia's Rival," Atlanta *World*, March 14, 1932, 4.

63 "Nine Lives for Ten Cents," Atlanta *World*, July 5, 1932, 6.

> active brain emanated the ideas and ideals firmly embedded in the *World* today. He is a type of whom there are too few in the race, for on men like these who can build institutions does the economic welfare of the race rest.[64]

While protest was distinctly different in the black press, society news was much like that in white newspapers. Myrdal noted that black society pages are "certainly no more exaggerated than the gossip pages of the small-town American newspaper." Yet he noted a tendency for blacks to

> stress "society" because whites deny them social prestige. They have to create prestige and distinctions of prestige among themselves, and there is an element of the caste protest in demonstrating that they have done it. But apart from this, Negroes, in their isolated and cramped world, enjoy reading among themselves in pleasant situations just like other small-town Americans.[65]

In the first daily issue of the *World*, society news started on page three and concluded on page eight. The notices reported recent meetings of such clubs as the Ladies Industrious Sewing Club, the Friendship Social Club, the Jolly 12 Social Club, the Silent 16 Club, and the Happy Syncopators. The reporter for the Twentieth Century Social Club, Miss Pauline Grier, wrote about dinner, dancing, and card playing, attended by two visitors from the Nine Below Zero Club.[66]

The pattern of competition for the recognition and respect of the white business community was evident at the *World*. The newspaper met the requirements of the Audit Bureau of Circulation and was admitted to membership in February 1934. It advertised the fact with a banner headline on the front page. In a story explaining that the ABC's circulation figures were the basis of advertising rates, the writer stated that, "All three white Atlanta dailies are members of the organization...." That story also noted that the daily *World*'s circulation, then about 3,000, was "almost entirely carrier delivered to the homes of Atlanta's large colored population." Further, the paper noted that its circulation was "bona fide" because it "was obtained purely on the merit of the product," not by giveaways or special offers.[67]

With the survival and apparent success of the *World*, Scott's prestige and potential rose. Along Auburn Avenue, there were few prece-

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[64] Davis, "Your World," 8.

[65] Myrdal, *Dilemma*, 919.

[66] "Clubs," Atlanta *World*, March 14, 1932, 8.

[67] "Daily World Admitted to ABC Membership; 'World' Now Is A.B.C. Member; Another Step Forward Is Made By Daily World In New Affiliation; Circulation Bona Fide," Atlanta *World*, Feb. 8, 1934, 1.

dents by which to compare his success, or his potential. The giant of Atlanta's black business community had been Alonzo Herndon, who died in 1926 at the age of sixty-eight. Born a slave in rural Georgia, Herndon was only seven years old when the Civil War ended and he left home and trekked toward Atlanta. He learned the barbering trade, eventually opened an elite downtown barbershop catering to Atlanta's white middle class, and through investments in real estate and the Atlanta Life Insurance Company, which he founded, became the city's first black millionaire. Herndon's legacy of accomplishment was a model that inspired young blacks such as Scott.[68] Like Herndon, Scott was beginning to invest in real estate around Auburn Avenue, and near Jacksonville, Florida. Despite the Depression, everything seemed to be going his way.

Then, one night in January 1934, Scott was ambushed and shot outside his home. It was the most shocking story the *World* had carried. The newspaper building at 210 Auburn Avenue was always open. Scott's sister, Ruth, then sixteen and just starting work on the switchboard, remembers stunned readers coming to the office. "The next day," she recalled, "it was shocking."[69] For two weeks, the *World* devoted the front page to the shooting and the aftermath. It reported Scott's condition in the hospital, his death eight days after the shooting, and his funeral. It announced that Scott had chosen his brother Cornelius as general manager. It covered the police investigation.

Scott had been able to help the police. When he was shot, he did not lose consciousness. As the *World* reported, he walked and crawled to a nearby home. After emergency surgery, doctors credited his survival to extraordinary physical strength and stamina. He had been shot from behind, and one .45 caliber bullet had entered at the hip and exited near the navel, perforating his intestines.[70] On the day that the *World* announced its membership in the Audit Bureau of Circulation, Scott died of peritonitis, which set in the third day after the shooting.[71]

On his deathbed, Scott reportedly named a suspect. His brother Cornelius said that Scott "wouldn't tell us until the end who he thought shot him." Finally, Scott told Cornelius that the assailant was probably George Maddox, the brother of the woman Scott had

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[68] Leonard Ray Teel, "A Former Slave Who Made Millions," *Georgia Trend*, II (January 1987), 134-39.

[69] Interview, Ruth Scott Simmons, April 29, 1988.

[70] "W.A. Scott Shot in Back; World Publisher Wounded By Unknown Man As He Leaves Garage Tuesday Night; Had Money In Valise," Atlanta *World*, Jan. 31, 1934.

[71] "W.A. Scott, Daily World Founder, Succumbs After Valiant Fight; Bullet Wound is Fatal to Youthful Publisher; Death Ends Brilliant Career; W.A. Scott, Founder of Atlanta Daily World and SNS, Succumbs," Atlanta *World*, Feb. 8, 1934, 1; Cliff McKay, "George Maddox Exonerated; Scott's Offer $200 Reward; Freed After Nine Hour Inquest; Verdict Reads W.A. Scott Met 'Death at Hands of Parties Unknown'; Inquest is Crowded," Atlanta *World*, Feb. 11, 1934, 1.

married only three months earlier. The brother had been visiting from Chicago on the day of the shooting.[72]

The suspicion seemed plausible. The family of the bride, Agnes Maddox, was reportedly distraught that she had married a man who had been married three times before. There were rumors that Scott had not been divorced properly from his third wife.

The confusion concerning his three previous marriages was clarified at the inquest. Scott's first wife, Lucile, the mother of his two sons, testified that she and Scott had agreed upon a divorce in 1929, so he could wed a young South Carolina woman named Mildred Jones. The Scott-Jones marriage failed in two months. In 1931, Scott wed Ella Ramsey of Atlanta. Given Scott's stature in the community, his third marriage attracted more attention and gossip than he felt comfortable with. "So much interest has been directed to my recent marriage," he said in a letter to his first wife, who worked at the Birmingham *World* while their two sons lived in Atlanta.[73] Evidence at the murder inquest indicated that one reason Scott had married Miss Ramsey was to have someone care for his sons. She testified Scott arranged in a prenuptial agreement to pay her $17 a week to care for the boys. Their marriage lasted eighteen months, at which time he asked her to go to Reno to get a divorce, shortly before his fourth marriage.[74]

Compared with his first three wives, Agnes Maddox was socially more established and educationally more his match. She was a college graduate and had been a college librarian.[75] Scott may have anticipated further commotion about his fourth marriage because he wed Miss Maddox secretly on October 21, 1933, in Cartersville, northwest of Atlanta, and revealed the secret to his mother only a day before he and his bride left in December for a honeymoon in Cuba.[76]

The murder inquest continued for nine hours, the longest in Atlanta in twenty years. Among the twenty witnesses, Scott's fourth wife spoke in defense of her father and brother. She said her father became reconciled to the marriage and welcomed them on their return from Cuba, after Scott had shown him all three divorce decrees. She said her brother congratulated her and Scott at breakfast on the morning before the shooting. Her father testified that he had settled his disagreement with Scott after seeing the divorce decrees. Three neighbors supported the brother's contention that he was visiting in their home at 10:30 p.m., the time Scott was shot.[77] Maddox was exonerated, and the

[72] Interview with Cornelius A. Scott, April 28, 1988.
[73] W.A. Scott to Lucile [sic] Scott, April 26, 1932, in Scott Family Papers.
[74] "George Maddox Exonerated," 5.
[75] Ibid., 1,5.
[76] Ibid., 5.
[77] Ibid.

Scott family offered a $200 reward for information about the killer.

Scott's death was an occasion of general mourning. Expressions of sympathy came from across the nation, particularly from the South. Clearly, Scott had had a strong influence on colleagues, associates, and the body of *World* readers. Many wrote testaments to his greatness as an innovator and an inspiring leader. An Atlanta pastor, the Rev. J.A. Martin, wrote, "Beginning without any money or capital of any kind, Mr. Scott did what all of our young Negroes must do in other ways – create places for self and others to stand and work. He set the example for a needy people."[78]

The funeral was held on Sunday, February 11, the day after a snowstorm that stopped the streetcars. Hundreds were stopped at the door of Wheat Street Baptist Church because the Church soon filled with 2,000 mourners.[79]

Those who came to the pulpit to share their remembrances sounded one theme: Scott had become one of the greatest leaders of his generation. His banker, L.D. Milton, praised his contribution to the black business community. Putting Scott's career in the perspective of the black man's struggle in segregated society, Milton said,

> It was difficult for W.A. Scott to live. It is difficult for any young Negro to live in this day and age. The young Negro is fighting in the dark all of the time. The people of his own age do not believe in him. The white man has been saying so long that it couldn't be done that he doesn't believe it, while the Negro has been told so long that it couldn't be done until he believes it. To break down the barriers is the problem of every young Negro.[80]

At the *World*, the staff, which had grown to fifty full-time employees, did not miss an issue during the crisis. Cornelius Scott had proved himself a capable manager during the absences of his brother, who in 1933 had become involved with the Scott Newspaper Syndicate, with real estate transactions, and with his fourth marriage. In a front-page editorial, the *World* announced that the change in leadership would result in no change in policy, that it was pledged to the "same ideals which have carried the only Negro daily and Sunday newspaper in the world to success...catering to the interests of the entire racial group."[81]

The *World* survives today, well past its heyday of the 1930s and 1940s. Its persistence, even as a four-days-a-week paper, is remarkable,

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[78] J.A. Martin, "Founder Praised by Rev. Martin," Atlanta *World*, Feb. 10, 1934, 1.

[79] Davis, "Snow and Rain," 1.

[80] Ibid.

[81] "Editorial: No Change in Policy," Atlanta *World*, Feb. 11, 1934, 1.

considering the odds it overcame. Of the hundreds of black newspapers begun during the era 1917-1934, only thirty-three survived into the mid-1960s.[82] The *World* stands today as a monument to W.A. Scott II and to his family.[83]

During the generation of its flourishing, when it could rely on the railroads for cheap and efficient movement of bundles of newspapers, the *World* was more than a successful commercial endeavor. As the only black-owned daily newspaper in the United States for more than a generation, it was a beacon to young black journalists. During the 1930s in particular, the *World* offered black journalists a special opportunity to edit and write for a daily newspaper managed and controlled by blacks. Beyond that, there was the thrill of knowing that the *World* cast its influence beyond the city – a lighthouse beaming to its own syndicate of 50 black-owned newspapers throughout the syndicate, circulating its national edition west to Iowa and north to Ohio.[84]

[82] Theodore G. Vincent, ed., *Voices of a Black Nation: Political Journalism in the Harlem Renaissance* (San Francisco: Ramparts Press Inc., 1973), 28.

[83] Cornelius Scott, eighty-one, is still the publisher, assisted by, among others, his daughter, Portia Scott; his sister, Ruth Scott Simmons; and his nephew, W.A. Scott, III, the surviving son of founder W.A. Scott.

[84] In the years from 1932-1956, the *World* newsroom employed a succession of talented college graduates who went on to prominent lifelong careers in the black press, including Frank Marshall Davis, Ric Roberts, Robert M. Ratcliff, Robert E. Johnson, and Lerone Bennett.

Historiographical Essay

The Civil War Press: Promoter of Unity or Neutral Reporter?

By Thomas Andrew Hughes

The Civil War is one of the most studied periods of American history, and understandably so. It was fought entirely in American territory, more Americans died in that war than in any other, and it was the only American war in which other Americans were the enemy. For these and other reasons, American historians continue to be especially fascinated by the Civil War.

This fascination is shared by a number of historians who have dealt with the role of journalism during the war. Most of their studies have focused on one or both of two major issues: military censorship of newspapers and press performance during the war. The way historians deal with these issues is usually dependent on what they consider to be the proper function of the press during wartime in general and during the Civil War in particular. Should the press direct its efforts toward unifying its readers in support of the war effort? Or should the press simply report on the war as a detached non-participant, striving always to tell the truth, without considering whether news reports reveal military secrets to the enemy? Generally, historians who believed the primary duty of the press was to support the war effort accepted censorship as necessary for military security, while those who believed the press should remain neutral condemned censorship as a repressive and unwarranted violation of the First Amendment.

Most historical treatments of the Civil War press can be divided into five schools of interpretation: the Contemporary school, the Developmental school, the Consensus school, the Southern Nationalist school, and the New Left or Radical school. The Contemporary school spanned from soon after the war ended until around 1913. Most Contemporary works were written by Northern reporters who had travelled with the Union army and wrote newspaper accounts of battles. Their works usually sought to justify their own actions and the actions of the

North in general while placing the blame for causing the war on the South. Most Union generals, then, were depicted favorably. However, generals who attempted to ban reporters from their camps or to control what they could and could not write, especially William T. Sherman, were singled out for special derision. Contemporary writers were usually proud of their own exploits and those of their colleagues, and most believed the Northern press performed admirably during the war.

A second group of historians, comprised of newspapermen who began their journalistic careers after the war had ended, began publishing evaluations of the Civil War press around 1914. Developmental writers were primarily interested in how the war led to modern journalistic practices and how well the Northern press performed as a profession during the war. When writing about censorship, they viewed it as part of a conspiracy to eliminate or at least weaken reporters' First Amendment rights. It did not and could not, however, prevent the Confederates from discovering Union army secrets, nor would stricter censorship have shortened the war. Therefore, censorship should not have been practiced because of its ineffectiveness and because it led to peacetime repression of press freedom. When evaluating the performance of the Northern press, some Developmental historians were critical of reporters' partisan attitudes during the war, but most believed that they had performed well under difficult conditions.

The Southern Nationalist and Consensus schools both began to emerge during the 1930s. The Consensus school is best understood as a reaction to the Progressive interpretation of American history, although Progressive historians have devoted little attention to the Civil War press. The Progressive school arose in the early 1900s as a part of the Progressive reform movement. Progressive historians were primarily concerned with explaining the causes and negative results of the war. The war was actually a class conflict between Northern labor and Southern aristocracy, Progressive writers believed, which led to America's industrialization and dehumanizing domination by abusive capitalists.

In reaction to the Progressive school, Consensus historians refuted the idea of the Civil War as a class conflict and ignored negative effects of the industrialization the war made possible. Rather, they emphasized that the war's outcome led to both the modernization of America and to a sense of national unity. Though they believed neither the North nor the South was solely to blame for causing the war, Consensus writers usually dealt only with the Northern press because modern American journalism nationwide was patterned after it. They argued that most Northern newspapers accepted the need for military security and conscientiously tried to determine what information they should not have published. Newspapers which printed sensitive military information, however, seriously damaged the national cause. Fur-

thermore, newspaper criticism of the army and of the Lincoln administration embarrassed some generals into attacking before they had originally intended and undermined public confidence in the management of the war. Thus Consensus historians usually concluded that governmental or military control of the press would have shortened the Civil War, and that in future wars the United States should institute an effective system of press censorship.

As the Progressive school began to be challenged by the Consensus school during the 1930s, a number of Southern historians began reacting defensively to the negative portrayals of the South's role in the war which had dominated the writing of American history. They tried to shift blame for causing the war to the North while proclaiming the South's innocence. When writing about the Civil War press, Southern Nationalist historians attacked the reputations of prominent Northern journalists who had been depicted favorably by most other American historians. They also praised the unity of the Southern press, as evident by its voluntary suppression of sensitive material, as a sign of the South's moral superiority.

The most recent school to deal with Civil War journalism grew from a group of historians in Europe and America who began attacking the established order and its views on the past, including Progressive and Consensus history, during the 1960s. New Left or Radical historians, as they came to be called, criticized Progressive historians for failing to actively work for the ideals they advocated. The New Left was even more critical of Consensus history, which they believed was written on behalf of existing power structures and perpetuated the myths which they believed needed to be destroyed in the interest of perfect justice. While the New Left historians borrowed heavily from Marxist historical theory, they rejected the strict economic determinism of Marxist history in order to celebrate the virtues of individualism.

New Left historians viewed the Civil War as a failure to create the new society which they believed should have resulted from the war. When writing about the role of the press during the war, New Left historians, although small in number, were militantly critical of the the tendency of war reporting on both sides to be biased and inaccurate. They were equally critical of censorship during the war, and believed that more often than not censorship was used to prevent the expression of unpopular opinions rather than to prevent the disclosure of military secrets.

The Contemporary School

Most of the works on Civil War journalism written during the first four decades after the war were by Northern reporters who had served as correspondents during the war. Their books were usually personal

reminiscences which attempted to justify their own actions, the actions of the Northern press in its conflicts with the Union army, and the Northern cause in general. They viewed the war as being caused by a Southern conspiracy to further the spread of slavery no matter what the consequences to the nation. The North, on the other hand, was simply defending itself and the Constitution against unprovoked aggression.

Union troops, then, were usually portrayed as courageous and totally devoted to the war effort, even after such terrible defeats as they suffered in the battle of Fredericksburg. Most Union generals were depicted as noble, statesman-like heroes leading the fight for truth and liberty. This did not hold true for General William T. Sherman, however, who fought vigorously against the press throughout the war. He frequently banned reporters from his camps, and even tried to have one reporter executed after first having him court-martialled. It is not surprising, then, that most reporters believed for the duration of the war an early newspaper account that stated Sherman was insane.

The efforts of Sherman and other Union generals to control the press aroused harsh criticism from most Contemporary historians. They believed that the military had no right to prohibit reporters from travelling with the army or to censor their dispatches. Such efforts were not intended to prevent the publication of military secrets, as the generals claimed, but were really meant to spare generals the embarrassment of legitimate criticism before the public. While admitting that some reporters had indeed acted with gross irresponsibility, Contemporary writers maintained that the entire profession had been unfairly judged on the basis of only a few transgressions. Most reporters, they argued, were conscientious men who had served both their profession and their country well under extremely trying conditions.

The first book to comment on Civil War journalism was Albert D. Richardson's *The Secret Service: The Field, The Dungeon, and the Escape* (1865), which was sent to press during the last few months of the war. Richardson's views were no doubt shaped by the fact that he was held for nearly two years before escaping from the Confederate prison camp at Salisbury, North Carolina, struggling 300 miles through snowbound mountains to Union-held Knoxville, Tennessee. Setting the tone for later books by other Northern correspondents, he praised the North while harshly criticizing the South. Some of his criticisms were nothing more than general insults directed at Southern women, with subsections of the book titled "Challenge from a Southern Woman," "Rebel Girl with Sharp Tongue," and the "Bloodthirstiness of Rebel Women."

Yet his devotion to the Northern cause was exceeded by his belief that the Union army had no right to exclude reporters from the army. When General Halleck did just that, Richardson decried the action as a shallow subterfuge to hide the general's fear of having his conduct

described to the country in anything other than official reports. He believed the general's action represented "a grave issue between the Military Power and the rights of the Press and the People."[1]

Noting that many Union generals and some of the general public held war correspondents in low esteem, Richardson argued that they were being judged unfairly because of the irresponsible actions of just a few reporters. According to him, two accounts of the battle of Pea Ridge, Arkansas, (one of which was praised by the London *Times* as the best battle account written during the war) by reporters who had not actually witnessed the battle were written "as a Bohemian freak," and were the only accounts fabricated by reputable journalists during the war. To prevent further such transgressions, he wrote, there should be a law authorizing reporters to accompany troops in the field which would hold them responsible for not publishing anything which could aid the enemy.

Richardson also foreshadowed later works by other correspondents with his evaluation of General Ambrose Burnside's role in the Union defeat at Fredericksburg. Although Richardson was not present at the battle, he spoke at length with Burnside a few days afterward. He was impressed with how the general accepted full responsibility for the loss of more than ten thousand men. Burnside was, he wrote, "great in his earnestness, his moral courage, and perfect integrity."[2] When ordered, the general flung his army upon the Rebels, and the result was defeat. Yet according to Richardson, that policy was the Union army's salvation. Though every soldier knew the battle was a bloody mistake, their spirit was not broken and they would have gone cheerfully into battle again the following week. Most other Contemporary accounts of the battle followed Richardson's example.

A much more critical evaluation of war correspondence, however, appeared only a few months later. In a series of three articles published in *The Nation*, beginning on July 20, 1865, former war correspondent Henry Villard traced the qualitative rise and fall of army reporting during the course of the war. Born in Germany as Ferdinand Heinrich Gustav Hilgard and educated at the University of Munich and the University of Würzburg before coming to America, he edited a German-language newspaper in Wisconsin while teaching himself how to write in English. After Americanizing his name, Villard became one of the most respected correspondents during the war, writing for both the New York *Herald* and the New York *Tribune*.

Villard argued that the quality of correspondence declined as the war progressed. He noted, for example, that some of the first accounts of the

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[1] Albert D. Richardson, *Secret Service; the Field, the Dungeon and the Escape* (Hartford, Conn.: American, 1865), 258.

[2] *Ibid.*, 306.

Bull Run campaign were quite good, and reports by the better correspondents steadily improved through 1862 and 1863. However, even then certain shortcomings were apparent that grew more glaring over the course of the war – incompleteness of information, inaccuracy of statement, and a resort to fiction to make stories more interesting. By the end of 1863, the decline was well under way. "From that time to the fall of the curtain in the grand national drama," Villard wrote, "a gradual depreciation in the value of army correspondence must have been noticed by every habitual reader of the daily papers."[3] This depreciation was caused by the succession of incompetent reporters into positions vacated by capable correspondents who were no longer able to withstand the extremely harsh rigors of the profession. Villard concluded that, overall, army correspondence had contributed a positive gain to journalism, as evidenced by the several former army correspondents who went on to hold important editorial positions at most of the leading newspapers in the country.

More representative of the Contemporary school were Villard's memoirs, published in 1904. This two-volume work takes a realistic look at Civil War journalism, although Villard painted his own performance and the righteousness of the North's cause in an unquestioningly favorable light. Perhaps the most interesting feature of the memoirs is Villard's descriptions of his dealings with major journalistic figures of the day. He wrote disdainfully of New York *Herald* editor James Gordon Bennett's "shameful record as a journalist," and of the "sneaking sympathy of his paper for the Rebellion, and its vile abuse of the Republicans for their antislavery sentiments."[4] In another dramatic episode he explained how in the battle of Fredericksburg, in order to prevent his Boston *Journal* colleague Charles Carleton Coffin from beating him to press with a battle account, he defied an interdict from General Burnside prohibiting reporters from travelling north without a special permit from his headquarters. In light of Burnside's attempt to control the press, it is hardly surprising that Villard blamed him for the Union army's defeat at Fredericksburg.

Coffin wrote his own account of Civil War correspondence, entitled *Four Years of Fighting* (1866). His treatment of the war was not nearly as detached as Villard's, nor was he as concerned with the performance of journalism as a profession. Instead, his book was a record of personal observations primarily concerned with justifying the actions and cause of the North. He interpreted the war as a mighty contest in which right triumphed over wrong, which resulted in the human race moving on to a higher civilization. He also condemned the South in no uncer-

[3]Henry Villard, "Army Correspondence: Its History," *The Nation*, 1(July 27, 1865), 115.

[4]Henry Villard, *Memoirs of Henry Villard: Journalist and Financier, 1835-1900*, Vol. 1 (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1904), 161.

tain terms, writing that "the Rebellion was an attempt to suppress Truth and Justice by tyranny."[5]

Understandably, then, his interpretation of the battle at Fredericksburg was quite different from Villard's. What Villard viewed as an "appalling disaster" Coffin saw as only "disheartening to the army." The Union army lost the battle only because some of the officers failed to support Burnside's plans wholeheartedly, Coffin wrote. Though repulsed, the soldiers felt they were not beaten and had no thought of giving up the fight. Coffin did not mention his being "scooped" by Villard, either.

One contemporary evaluation of Civil War journalism stands out because its author served both as managing editor of one of the most important newspapers of the time and then as Assistant Secretary of War in the Union government. Charles A. Dana had worked closely with Horace Greeley at the New York *Tribune* for fifteen years before Greeley asked him to resign in April 1862 because Greeley favored greater efforts to achieve peace while Dana supported a continuation of the war until the South's rebellion had been completely squelched. Lincoln's Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton offered Dana a job in the war department soon after, and promoted him to Assistant Secretary in 1863. Dana was present at what has become an often cited example of tense relations between the Northern press and the Union army, when General Meade paraded a correspondent wearing a sign reading "Libeller of the Press" before the troops and expelled him from camp because he had published a report that Meade advocated retreat after the Battle of the Wilderness.

Directly contradicting negative evaluations of army correspondence by Villard and later historians, Dana wrote in *Recollections of the Civil War* (1898) that the above example of tense army-press relations was an exception rather than the rule. He argued it was not often that correspondents got into trouble with the army, because as a rule they were discreet. Yet this observation seems inconsistent with Dana's accounts of General Sherman's attitudes towards reporters. After notifying the general of an accurate report of his upcoming movements published in the Indianapolis *Journal*, Dana wrote, Sherman responded with two "characteristic" dispatches. The first read, "Dispatch of 9th read. Can't you send to Indianapolis and catch that fool and have him sent to me to work on the forts?"[6] In the second, Sherman ordered that when newspapers publish information "too near the truth," Dana should attempt to counteract its effect by publishing contradictory reports of the same information calculated to mislead the Confederates.

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[5]Charles Carleton Coffin, *Four Years of Fighting: A Volume of Personal Observation with the Army and Navy* (Boston: Ticknor & Fields, 1866; reprint, Arno Press, 1970), 557.

[6]Charles A. Dana, *Recollections of the Civil War* (New York: Appleton, 1898), 216-217.

In accordance with Sherman's first request, Dana ordered a Union general in Indianapolis to determine who alerted the *Journal* to Sherman's movements and to arrest him. However, the person or persons responsible were never found.

The Developmental School

By the second decade of the twentieth century, some historians who had not worked as war correspondents began to provide more detached evaluations of press performance during the Civil War. A number of professional journalists who were also amateur historians tried to explain how the war had led to a revolution in journalism in the North, which established the modern standards of professional journalistic practice to which they had been indoctrinated. The war marked the end of editorially-based journalism, they believed, and established unbiased news accounts as the primary function of newspapers. Even more important, it established the right to report as an essential element of the democratic process.

Developmental historians were also especially interested in how well the Northern press performed when evaluated against modern standards of journalism. Some believed that, even allowing for the problems of military censorship and dangerous battle conditions which war correspondents faced, most war reporting was of poor quality. Others believed that, on the contrary, most reporters performed surprisingly well despite these obstacles. Most agreed, however, that the quality of reporting did improve during the war.

Naturally, then, Developmental historians viewed military censorship as a threat to proper press performance. Some argued that censorship was simply unacceptable in a democracy, as the national cause was best served by a public well informed with truthful and accurate accounts. Others criticized censorship on more practical grounds, writing that attempts at censorship were futile as reporters always found ways around them. In fact, they argued, censorship actually damaged the war effort by confusing the Northern population while failing to prevent the Confederate army from learning Union military secrets. Furthermore, most concluded, none of the available evidence indicates that stricter censorship would have shortened the war.

One of the first Developmental interpretations of Civil War journalism was Frederick L. Bullard's *Famous War Correspondents* (1914), a collection of biographical sketches of representative war reporters from 1790 until the Spanish-American War in the late 1890s. Bullard believed that the most important duty of the press during wartime was to tell the truth. Publicity does the most to promote peace, he wrote, and military censorship is detrimental to humanity. Furthermore, attempts

at censorship were ineffective because in time competent reporters always discover ways to tell what they saw.

The War of Secession, as Bullard called it, was extremely important in the development of war correspondence. No system of covering a war of such geographic magnitude existed at the war's beginning, but papers began organizing for the collection of war news upon an extensive scale "the instant the conflict began." Each important city had at least one newspaper with a correspondent in the field, and some journals in larger cities supported several war reporters. Yet these efforts were small compared to those of the three large New York dailies – the *Herald*, the *Tribune*, and the *Times*. These papers, led by Bennett's *Herald*, spent prodigious sums of money to establish and support their war departments.

Bullard, like Villard, observed that few correspondents could long endure the rigors of war reporting. Yet he was much more favorable to the profession overall. While admitting that some reporters were irresponsible adventurers prone to fabrication, he maintained that "far the greater number were as loyal and serious in their work as were the soldiers who fought the battles the reporters described."[7]

Arriving at a similar conclusion was Havilah Babcock's "The Press and the Civil War" (1929). Since no previous war of any magnitude had been covered as thoroughly, Babcock wrote, the Civil War contributed notably to the development of military correspondence. It also marked the end of "scurrilously personal journalism" as the newspaper institution became more important than individual editors. Newspapers became accustomed to spending huge sums of money to gather and present the news first, setting the precedent of breaking stories as soon after they occur as possible. In addition, the demand for a continuous chronicle of the war established the Sunday paper as a regular feature of the more important metropolitan dailies.

Babcock evaluated the effect of the war on journalistic development in both North and South. The war was unquestionably better reported in the North, but Southern papers were much more effective in keeping military secrets out of the news and thus did a better job of promoting the interests of their section. While the war stimulated journalistic development in the North, it stifled development in the South through the scarcity of materials and labor and through the constant danger of suspension or control by the Union army as it conquered Southern cities. "The effect of the Civil War upon the journalistic development of the South," he wrote, "unlike its effect upon that of the North, was almost uniformly discouraging."[8]

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[7]Frederick L. Bullard, *Famous War Correspondents* (New York: Beekman Publishers, 1974 reprint from the 1914 edition), 379.

[8]Havilah Babcock, "The Press and the Civil War," *Journalism Quarterly* 6 (1929): 5.

One of the most influential Developmental interpretations of Civil War journalism is found in Frank Luther Mott's classic textbook *American Journalism*, the first edition of which was published in 1941. This work served as the starting point for most historical study on the American press undertaken during the following forty years. Mott viewed the past as the story of how journalism reached its modern state and thus was primarily concerned with documenting the progress of journalism and its practices. This assumption is evident in the book's chapters on Civil War journalism. No war before or since was as thoroughly covered by eyewitness correspondents, Mott wrote. Yet news was sometimes late because telegraph facilities were not always available, forcing reporters to travel great distances through enemy territory on horseback or even on foot to get their stories to press. Although newswriting was more direct than it had been immediately preceding the war, he wrote, modern news-story form had not yet been developed. Mott also criticized military censorship, arguing that it led some correspondents to curry favor from the generals they covered. Such reporters "thus became press agents for their generals and built up popular and even political reputations. Such promotion encouraged jealous rivalries and improper ambitions."[9]

Louis M. Starr argued similarly in *Bohemian Brigade: Civil War Newsmen in Action* (1954) that much Northern reporting was hackneyed and deficient, whether judged by modern standards or according to the prevailing view of the time. He explained that this was the result of the news revolution bursting upon journalism before conceptions of accuracy and objectivity were completely formulated and because the work paid too poorly to attract many able men. Unlike Villard, however, Starr believed the quality of reporting improved during the course of the war. What was most important to Starr, though, was that reporters contributed to the development of journalism by satisfying the public's desire for news. This they accomplished by reporting the war so incessantly that it became an inescapable reality, thus helping news gain preeminence over editorials, and by establishing the right to report as essential to democracy. This right had to be fought for, as the First Amendment guaranteed only the right to print, not the right to report. "Against natural obstacles," Starr wrote, "against one another, against the many-sided obduracy of public officials, they have gradually established a quasi-legal right which is indispensable to a people who must be informed in order to govern themselves."[10]

The most ambitious and thoroughly documented Developmental interpretation was *The North Reports the Civil War* by J. Cutler An-

[9]Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism, A History: 1690-1960* (New York: Macmillan, 1962), 338.

[10]Louis M. Starr, *Bohemian Brigade: Civil War Newsmen in Action* (New York: Knopf, 1954), 40.

drews (1955). He agreed with Mott that no other great war had been as thoroughly covered by eyewitness reporters. Although much of their reporting was full of errors, he wrote, most of the inaccuracies were not intentional but resulted from the haste and confusion involved in news-gathering after a battle. Even the intentionally dishonest practices of some reporters were more the fault of their managing editors' low ethical standards than of the reporters themselves. Such editors were more likely to censure a reporter for being "scooped" by one of his colleagues than for including material of questionable truth in his accounts.

Andrews was more critical of the publication of sensitive military intelligence than were most other Developmental historians, writing that "the leakage of such information through the press was well-nigh scandalous."[11] This does not mean, however, that he necessarily believed there should have been greater control of the Northern press during the war. Censorship was at times overly severe, he wrote, as those who administered it often interdicted wholesome criticism of the general execution of the war effort. However, censorship was most often utterly ineffectual, managing at best only to delay rather than to prohibit the public from learning of Union army defeats. Andrews concluded that although the profession was tarnished by irresponsible editors and overzealous reporters, though it faced erratic censorship and temperamental generals, the Northern press performed well during the war.

He followed this work with the most extensively researched treatment of the Southern press, *The South Reports the Civil War* (1970). The war brought about many of the same changes in Confederate newspaper practice, Andrews wrote, that had occurred in the North. Among these was an increasing emphasis on news over editorial opinion and the use of special correspondents. However, wartime scarcities of materials and the loss of a large number of employees drafted into military service greatly limited the effectiveness of the Southern press. Yet in spite of these difficulties, the war stimulated greater public interest in news in the South than had ever been known before.

This greater interest in news did not necessarily lead to good reporting, however. Confederate battle accounts at their worst were extremely partisan, used an inflated style of writing, and downplayed Southern defeats while greatly exaggerating victories. On the other hand, Andrews wrote, Confederate war reporting at its best was comparable to the best work by Northern correspondents. The better Southern reporters were acceptably accurate, grasped the larger significance of the events that they observed, and were willing to recognize and admit defeat at times. He concluded that the Southern press

[11] J. Cutler Andrews, *The North Reports the Civil War* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1955).

did its best to provide full coverage of the military and political events of the war, and performed remarkably well considering the great difficulties it faced.

Though he was critical of censorship in general, Andrews was less critical of voluntary censorship in the Confederate press than were other Developmental historians. Such restraint did impose a severe strain on the spirit of news enterprise, he wrote, but it was the inevitable consequence of an environment in which true freedom of the press had never been possible. Andrews also pointed out what many other historians had either ignored or failed to recognize: that the Southern press generally opposed attempts to broaden official powers of censorship. Furthermore, at least one paper, the Knoxville *Whig*, was shut down six months after the war began by Confederate authorities, who destroyed its press and types. Some other anti-secessionist papers in the South, Andrews wrote, might also have been suppressed had not public pressure forced them to change their editorial policies, had not changes in management been brought about, or had not lack of support forced them out of business soon after the war began.

Joseph J. Mathews was more critical of the partisan nature of Civil War journalism. He wrote in *Reporting the Wars* (1957) that as the war progressed, the distinction between war news and general news became meaningless. Political biases permeated every consideration; editors gave favorable coverage to pet generals and their strategies while blasting uncooperative military leaders, and some generals were partial to particular journalists. This resulted in numerous instances of reprehensible conduct by correspondents, who "reflected the prevailing low code of journalistic ethics."[12] Yet this was not entirely their fault, as reporters' accounts were usually governed by the biases of their employers.

The enduring concern over censorship was the focus for one of the best researched and well-written of recent Developmental interpretations, John F. Marszalek's *Sherman's Other War: The General and the Civil War Press* (1981). Marszalek contended that the fundamental question of the press during war is still what it was during the Civil War: whether or not the government should impose restrictions upon the press, and if so, to what extent. Because this issue has not been conclusively resolved by the Supreme Court or by the U.S. Congress, he wrote, powerful generals such as Sherman can and have imposed their own controls on the press as they saw fit. Therefore, "this nation of

[12]Joseph J. Mathews, *Reporting the Wars* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1957), 84.

laws still depends on the whims of man in the crucial area of First Amendment rights in war."[13]

Marszalek explained the battles between Sherman and the press as personal conflicts rather than as a constitutional debate. Thus they were indicative of the historical tendency of press control in wartime to be an ad hoc rather than a constitutional reaction to immediate circumstances.

Sherman's fears were misguided, Marszalek wrote, because whatever Union military intelligence reached the Confederates in Northern newspapers was usually so buried under details that it was hard to find and, therefore, of only limited value. Furthermore, stricter censorship would only have silenced essential criticism but would not have measurably shortened the war. "Sherman's battles with reporters," he wrote, "shows that grave danger exists to freedom of the press any time such a powerful public figure is able to put his anti-press ideas into practice."[14] He concluded, therefore, that these battles were obvious manifestations of a recurring movement toward repression in past wars and a warning of what will probably happen in future conflicts.

The Southern Nationalist School

By the 1930s, some Southern historians had become defensive in reaction to the vast body of Civil War literature which was critical of the South, and began to re-evaluate relations between North and South before and during the war in order to vindicate their section. The result was a loosely defined and generally romantic movement which attempted to portray the agrarian Southern way of life as superior to the urbanized and industrialized lifestyle of the North. When writing about the war, Southern Nationalist historians usually exonerated the South while blaming the North for causing the war. They charged that the North considered itself the nation and destroyed the sectional balance of power by insisting on its own dominance. The cause of the war was not slavery, they argued, but the North's intent to destroy the superior Southern way of life.

When writing about Civil War journalism, Southern Nationalist historians accused prominent Northern editors of fanning the flames of aggressive hatred in the North against the South. Therefore, they attempted to refute prevailing views about the role of the Northern press in the war because they believed these views were accepted uncritically from self-serving accounts written by Northern journalists. They also ridiculed newspapers edited by occupying Union troops in defeated Southern towns.

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[13]John F. Marszalek, *Sherman's Other War: The General and the Civil War Press* (Memphis: Memphis State University Press, 1981), 17.

[14]*Ibid*, 212.

Southern Nationalist treatments of the Confederate press, however, tended toward heroic depictions of Confederate editors and of the few known Confederate correspondents. They praised the voluntary censorship exercised by Southern newspapers, which resulted in far fewer breaches of military security than suffered by the Union army in the pages of Northern papers. This demonstrated that Southern papers more successfully served the interests of their section, they argued, implying that the publication of Union military secrets in Northern papers was indicative of the North's disunity and inherent moral weakness. Such views continued to appear as recently as 1969, when Hodding Carter wrote, "Whatever else may be said of the Southern press, the newspapers of the South have certainly demonstrated closer identification with the aspirations and turmoil and tragedy of their region than have those of any other part of the United States."[15]

One of the first Southern Nationalist interpretations of Civil War journalism was Lester J. Cappon's "The Yankee Press in Virginia, 1861-1865" (1935). Cappon ridiculed newspapers edited by Union personnel in defeated Virginia towns and cities. For instance, a single-issue paper entitled *The Connecticut Fifth* (produced by the Fifth Regiment of Connecticut Volunteers after their arrival in Winchester) "insulted the Confederate flag" although the "Yankees claimed to have maintained good order" in the city. Cappon wrote similarly of *The New Regime*, published by Major General Benjamin F. Butler in Norfolk, referring to it as "Butler's mouthpiece." *The New Regime* "lacked the comradery so characteristic of the cruder Yankee news-sheets" and was a business affair calculated to further the policies of the Union government.[16]

While Cappon attempted to discredit the North with his criticisms of occupation editors from the Union army, Richard Barksdale Harwell (1941) attempted to cast a favorable light on the South's role in the war by praising the books and magazines published in Atlanta during the war.[17] He noted that the necessity to publish newspapers, government documents and business records in the South was widely acknowledged. However, he challenged arguments that the publication of books to be read for pleasure was not necessary. Histories of the war, biographies of Southern leaders, and especially fiction were very important in maintaining Confederate morale. Thus Harwell tried to destroy stereotypes of the Civil War South as culturally inferior to or less literary than the North.

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[15]Hodding Carter, *Their Words Were Bullets: The Southern Press in War, Reconstruction, and Peace* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1969), 1.

[16]Lester J. Cappon, "The Yankee Press in Virginia, 1861-1865," *William and Mary Quarterly* 15 (January 1935): 85.

[17] Richard B. Harwell, "Atlanta Publications of the Civil War," *Atlanta Historical Bulletin* 6 (July 1941): 165-200.

David M. Potter, on the other hand, minced no words in his condemnation of Northern Republican leaders. For instance, he wrote in *Horace Greeley and Peaceable Secession* (1941) that William H. Seward in the months preceding the war gave incessant expression to a "somewhat mystical conviction that the portentuous and explicit acts of the South were evidences of a passing frenzy which would subside of itself."[17] Meanwhile Abraham Lincoln retreated into an impenetrable silence. Lesser Republicans, including New York *Tribune* editor Horace Greeley, were "generally either blustering or vacillating, and, in either case, unrealistic" throughout the winter of 1860-1861.

Potter set out to destroy the predominant historical assumption which identified Greeley with peaceable separation. Although one well-known Greeley editorial said "we insist on letting them go in peace," Potter wrote, historians have ignored that expediency prompted Greeley to pretend to offer a separation which he did not expect the South to accept. Nor did historians recognize that the phrase and others like it were surrounded by conditions, reservations, and ambiguities which nullified its apparent meaning. Thus by concealing the fact that the nation had to choose between compromise and war until it was too late to prevent war, Greeley was at least partially to blame for causing the war.

The Southern Nationalist interpretation continues to appear occasionally, and in some cases has seemed to grow more bitter with the passage of time. One such example is William Stanley Hoole's *Vizetelly Covers the Confederacy* (1957). A warmly favorable biography of *Illustrated London News* correspondent Frank Vizetelly, who according to Hoole was the only special correspondent to cover the Confederate army, it also lashes out at the North nearly a century after the war ended. Hoole prefaced the book with memories of his father, born in 1860, who knew "the pain and the suffering and the bellyaching hunger that lay in Sherman's unholy swath across the South."[18]

The Consensus School

The Consensus School is best understood as a reaction to the perspective which dominated the study of American history for about thirty years of the first half of the twentieth century: the Progressive school. The Progressive school of American history first developed during the domestic reform movement around 1900 and was concerned primarily with social problems resulting from an unfair distribution of wealth and power in American society. Progressive historians believed

[18]David M. Potter, "Horace Greeley and Peaceable Secession," *Journal of Southern History* 7 (1941): 145.

[19]W. Stanley Hoole, *Vizetelly Covers the Confederacy* (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: Confederate Publishing Co., 1957), 11.

that the Civil War was actually a class conflict in which the industrialists, laborers, and farmers of the North destroyed the Southern planting aristocracy and eliminated its influence in national government. Yet Progressive historians usually condemned the war for leading American society to domination by ruthless capitalists concerned only for their own profit. As a result, reform was needed to achieve a fairer distribution of wealth and power.

In response to the Progressive perspective, Consensus historians argued that the Civil War was not a social war which led to an immoral domination of society by capitalists but rather a blessing in disguise that led to a modern and united America. The war was really an irrepressible conflict that grew out of sectional differences on issues of national policy, not the façade of a deeply rooted class conflict. Therefore, neither side was necessarily to blame for causing the war, although the South was clearly in the wrong for refusing to give up slavery and for seceding from the union.

Because of their attitude toward the South, Consensus historians usually wrote about the Northern press. They believed that most Northern newspapers agreed on the necessity for military security and sincerely attempted to avoid printing any information which could possibly aid the enemy. However, they were critical of newspapers which published reports about the locations and movement plans of Union troops. In so doing, these papers seriously damaged the national cause.

While most historians who dealt with press censorship during the Civil War condemned it as an unwarranted and misguided act of repression, Consensus historians believed that there should have been stricter governmental control over what Northern newspapers could print. They argued that press censorship had been ineffective only because it was so randomly enforced, inflicting more damage to the Northern cause than if there had been no censorship at all. Therefore, stricter and more consistent censorship would have made the war effort more effective and might have shortened the war. The ultimate lesson to be learned from the role of newspapers during the war, then, is that in future wars the United States should control the press adequately enough to assure that it does not damage the national war effort. The national good, Consensus historians argue, is more vital than the practices of one institution.

Although the Consensus interpretation did not begin to acquire a sizable following until the 1930s, James G. Randall's "The Newspaper Problem in Its Bearing Upon Military Secrecy During the Civil War" (1918) is clearly consistent with the Consensus perspective.[20] Randall

[20] Randall's interpretations are usually classified with what Gerald Grob and George Athan Billias called the "Revisionist" school of Civil War History, which seems to be at odds with the Consensus per-

was critical of Northern newspapers for obstructing the war effort. They seriously harmed the national cause, he wrote, by frequently revealing military information and undermining public confidence in management of the war. Governmental intervention in the press, however, was relatively slight and, in any case, was much less effective than public opinion and the actions of private citizens. Editors suspected of disloyalty were threatened, sometimes run out of town, and newspaper offices were frequently attacked by mobs. As Randall wrote, "It may be said that the government did far less than the enthusiastic Union men of the time would have wished in the way of controlling the press."[21] As a result, there was no real suppression of opinion during the war.

Similarly, Adolph O. Goldsmith wrote in "Reporting the Civil War: Union Army Press Relations" (1956) that most Northern newspapers recognized the necessity for military security and made conscientious efforts to judge what should be omitted from news reports. Therefore, restrictions on handling of war news were generally very loose, but unnecessarily tight in some specific cases. This haphazardness of controls inflicted more damage on the war effort than if there had been no controls at all, Goldsmith wrote, while systematic and conscientious handling of news censorship might have shortened the war. Also, uninformed newspaper criticism of Lincoln's war strategies prodded some generals into striking before they were ready and did not contribute to an effective prosecution of the war. He concluded that in modern warfare rigid control of all news is essential to military success.

As Lincoln's most prominent critic, then, New York *Tribune* editor Horace Greeley was singled out by Consensus historians for special derision. James H. Trietsch, for instance, wrote in *The Printer and the Prince* (1955) that although Greeley was motivated by a fundamentally patriotic feeling, he was flighty and inconsistent. For example, immediately after the war Greeley declared himself not for antagonism in peace but for lenient treatment of the South to encourage fraternal unity, apparently not realizing that his attacks on Lincoln's cautious military policies during the war had fanned the hatred which the North felt toward the South. Greeley would now have to abandon such campaigns, Trietsch wrote, in favor of a sober appeal for amnesty and for a genuine resumption of national citizenship. Trietsch concluded that only after Lincoln's death did Greeley realize how wise the president had been, and how his own misguided efforts had undermined

spective. According to their definition of the Revisionist school, no possible good can result from war and the Civil War in particular was an avoidable conflict. See Gerald Grob and George Athan Billias, *Interpretations of American History: Patterns and Perspectives*, Vol. 1 (New York: The Free Press, 1967), 426-427.

[21]James G. Randall, "The Newspaper Problem in Its Bearing upon Military Secrecy During the Civil War," *American Historical Review* 23 (January 1918): 332.

what he now recognized as the common goals toward which each of them had worked.

The New Left School

In the 1960s, a group of historians in Europe and America began attacking the established order and its views on the past, including Progressive and Consensus history. New Left, or Radical, historians, as they came to be called, criticized Progressive historians for failing to actively work for the ideals they advocated. The Progressive aim of measured social reform was too cautious for the New Left, who wanted to transform history into a "conscisousness-raising activity" on behalf of a social revolution.[22] The New Left was even more critical of Consensus history, which it believed was written on behalf of existing power structures and perpetuated the myths which needed to be destroyed in the interest of perfect justice. While New Left historians borrowed heavily from Marxist historical theory, they rejected the strict economic determinism of Marxist history in order to celebrate the virtues of individualism. The social revolution and resulting new order which they wanted was to be brought about by individual actions in the interest of individuals.[23]

New Left historians viewed the Civil War as a failure to create the new society which they believed should have resulted from the war. When writing about the role of the press during the war, New Left historians – who, it should be pointed out, form only a miniscule group – argued that the war was detrimental to journalistic standards. They believed that rather than serving as loyal propaganda sheets for their governments, newspapers should have printed the truth during the war no matter what the consequences to the war effort. Thus they were critical of the tendency of war reporting on both sides to be biased and inaccurate.

New Left historians were equally critical of censorship during the war. They believed that more often than not censorship was used to prevent the expression of unpopular opinions rather than to prevent the disclosure of military secrets. Therefore, it posed a threat to democracy by creating attitudes which would lead to peacetime repression. They refuted arguments, however, that censorship was primarily responsible for the poor quality of Civil War reporting. Problems were more the result of reporters' partisan attitudes than of either censorship or the hazardous conditions under which reporters had to work.

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[22]See Ernst Breisach, *Historiography; Ancient, Medieval, & Modern* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 392-393.

[23]Phillip Knightley, *The First Casualty; From the Crimea to Vietnam: The War Correspondent as Hero, Propagandist, and Myth Maker* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), 25.

In their final analyses, New Left historians usually concluded that Civil War reporters damaged the public's understanding of the causes and effects of war with warped accounts of reality. If they had reported the truth instead, the war might have been prevented or at least shortened.

The New Left interpretation as applied to Civil War journalism is best embodied by Phillip Knightley's *The First Casualty; From the Crimea to Vietnam: The War Correspondent as Hero, Propagandist, and Myth Maker* (1975). Knightley, who is employed by the *Times* of London, believed that most reporters from both sides performed poorly. He wrote that the majority of Northern correspondents were ignorant, dishonest, and unethical. As a result, their reports were frequently inaccurate, often fabricated, partisan, and inflammatory. Yet much of the blame for this lay not with the reporters themselves, but with the unreasonable demands of their editors. Getting "scoops" came to count more than accuracy or balance; therefore reporters were more likely to be fired for sending no news at all than for inventing accounts of battles they had not seen. Editors expected and received superhuman efforts from their correspondents in the field, yet most reporters were always short of money and had great trouble getting reimbursed for justifiable expenses. Even Henry Villard, one of the most respected Civil War correspondents, was knocked to the floor by his editor at the New York *Tribune* after presenting an expense account.

Nor could the blame rest entirely with the Northern press. Early attempts at censorship by the Union government succeeded only in creating chaos within the Northern population, as demonstrated by an incident in which all the New York newspapers carried stories of a "glorious victory" that was actually a "scandalous defeat" (the battle of Bull Run). Censorship was never effective because of confusion over who was to enforce it, and inevitably, the original intention to suppress only information valuable to the enemy became the desire to also suppress material critical of the North.

Knightley was even more critical of the Southern press for its deviations from the truth. At the beginning of the war, he wrote, the Southern press was partisan, political, and thirty years behind the times. It made little attempt to separate news from editorial opinion; thus fair and objective reporting was almost unknown. In fact, most Confederate reporters believed that loyalty to the South came before any professional requirements of truth and objectivity, as evident in reports on battles which never actually happened. This made it impossible for the Confederate press to produce an accurate record of the war's progress. "Cowed by censorship," Knightley wrote, "determined to maintain morale, and poorly served by the majority of its correspondents, the Confederate press lent itself to the government's propaganda line much more readily than did the Northern press."[23]

He concluded, therefore, that the Civil War was one of the poorer periods in the progress of war correspondence, despite the sweeping changes it brought in journalistic techniques. However, it did establish war correspondence as a respected specialization within the profession of journalism. Yet Knightley considered this no great accomplishment, sarcastically remarking "all that was needed now were bigger and better wars."[24]

Conclusions

Most historians who have studied Civil War journalism agree that the war led to a revolution in journalistic practices which for the first time established news, rather than editorial opinion, as the primary purpose of newspapers. What they disagree about is whether press censorship during the war should not have occurred at all or should have been utilized more extensively, and whether the press performed admirably or poorly. While this study identified five schools of interpretation from which historians have approached these questions, all have their limitations. The Contemporary and Southern Nationalist perspectives were marred because of their sectional partisanship. Likewise, the Developmental, Consensus, and New Left perspectives have their own biases, too.

Although this study's examination of these schools of interpretation may make it seem that the study of Civil War journalism has enjoyed a good deal of variety, in actuality the field has been dominated by the Developmental perspective. This is probably because most writers who have dealt with Civil War journalism were college professors who first worked as professional journalists themselves, and therefore had little notion that the history of journalism could be anything other than the story of the origins and progress of journalistic practices. As a result, much of their work provides little useful insights into history and is of little interest to non-journalists. The Consensus work on American history reached its peak during the secure and prosperous decade of the 1950s and declined in popularity in the face of massive social unrest during the late 1960s. Journalism historians, on the other hand, were slow to pick up on the Consensus approach, and it still may offer possibilities for fruitful study in this field. As for the New Left perspective, its similarity to Marxist historical theory will likely prevent it from gathering a large following among American historians because of what Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky call the American "national religion of anti-Communism."[25] Something should be said, also, of James Carey's Cultural approach even though no studies have

[24] *Ibid.*

[25] *The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York: Pantheon, 1988), 2.

applied it to Civil War journalism. Although the idea has been a popular one for purposes of discussion in studies of other topics, adherents of the interpretation have been hampered by two major problems: (1) reliance on secondary rather than primary sources and (2) subordination of facts to theory. Unless these problems are solved, there is little prospect that Cultural historians will produce any credible explanations of Civil War journalism.

Yet, many aspects of the topic need study. There have been some investigations, for example, of what role the press may have had in causing the war; yet, research still is needed. Eric Foner argued that "the same institutions which created mass participation in politics [including journalism] also made possible the emergence of the sectional agitator – the radical, North and South."[26] Prior to the 1830s, national poltical parties that created alliances between elites in each section of the country and consciously suppressed disruptive sectional issues prevented the development of sectional ideology as the organizing principle of poltical combat. Therefore, the role of journalism, if any, in creating and propelling both the abolitionist assault in the 1830s and the southern defense of slavery spurred by it needs to be examined.

Civil War journalism, after more than a century of historical investigation, remains a topic offering great possibility to historians.

[26] Eric Foner, *Politics and Ideology in the Age of Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 31.

BOOK REVIEWS

David Linton and Ray Boston, editors. *The Newspaper Press in Britain.* London and New York: Mansell Publishing Co., 1987. 361 pp. Appendices and Index. Cloth. $45.00.

There has been an urgent need for a compilation of works dealing with the British newspaper press which would cover the three decades 1959-1960, the years of publication of Warren C. Price's the *Literature of Journalism: An Annotated Bibliography.* But this ambitious effort by Linton and Boston is not only an attempt to fill the thirty-year bibliographical gap, but to cover what Price did not include or was unable to include in his pioneering work. The concept of the project emanated from Linton's vast knowledge of British journalism and his experience editing *Benn's Press Directory,* and was launched during 1983 with the assistance of the knowledgeable Gordon Phillips, the former archivist of *The Times* of London. Because Phillips, assuming responsibilities at the History of Advertising Trust, had to leave the project, Ray Boston (formerly associated with the Centre for Journalism, University of Wales in Cardiff) was recruited as a replacement.

The bibliographical guide comprises over 2,600 annotated items covering almost every facet of the British press. Here we have technical works, periodical articles, unpublished theses, catalogues, press guides, anniversary issues, novels, biographies, autobiographies, and reminiscences of journalists, editors, and proprietors, and, of course, newspaper histories. Only the constraints of the publisher have prevented Linton and his collaborator from including more material. But compensating for what they had to omit or delete are two appendices offering (1) a chronology of the development of the British press and (2) a list of the papers of many journalists, editors, and press lords and surviving (or known) archives of newspapers.

No project of such ambitions and wide coverage can be flawless. In this guide, the flaws are primarily those of organization, selectivity, omissions, and mistakes. For example, although alphabetical arrangement of items is useful, listings by subject would in some respects be more helpful in the utilization of this work. In the realms of selectivity, some of the items chosen are far less important than what was not listed on certain topics. A very serious shortcoming is the omission of

some highly significant books and periodical articles on journalists, editors, and press proprietors involved in the Chartist movement which have been published during the past two decades. The first two volumes of the *Biographical Dictionary of Modern British Radicals since 1770*, which contains biographical essays on at least two dozen Radicals who were journalists or editors of the Radical and non-Radical daily and weekly press media, are also missing. Similarly, in the Appendix offering the list and location of the papers of prominent figures in British journalism, there is an important omission of the Alfred Milner collection in the Bodleian Library and an incomplete entry on Sir Edward Tyas Cook.

But these are really cavils which do not diminish the value of this guide as a most useful bibliographical reference for all concerned with British newspaper history. It is a job well done.

J.O. Baylen Georgia State University (retired)

Andrew Kreig. *Spiked: How Chain Management Corrupted America's Oldest Newspaper*. 2nd edition. Old Sayebrook, Conn.: Peregrine Press, 1988. $9.95.

This is not a subtle academic book that pussyfoots around tough conclusions with ambiguous generalities. The second edition of Andrew Kreig's *Spiked*, first published in 1987, is a hard-hitting expose of the bad things that happen when a so-called "good" group buys out a newspaper that has been around for years and alters journalistic goals by focusing on profits and prizes.

Kreig, who worked for the *Courant* before leaving to go into freelancing and law school, makes four major charges: irresponsible chain power; near-monopoly market dominance; individual wrongdoing; and lack of oversight by the institutions of journalism, including top corporate management, ombudsmen, and journalism reviews themselves. *Spiked* is less important for its limited history than it is as a modern case history. It focuses attention where the real moral and ethical corruption of the American press most rightly lies: in the hands of the owners and managers who have the greatest opportunity and responsibility for reform.

Kreig's book provides dozens of examples of what took place after the *Courant* was purchased for $105.6 million in 1979 and invaded by a group of new managers, including Lou Grant-model Mark Murphy and his West Coast "Beach Boys," and editor-publisher Michael Davies, "the Kansas City Chief." Although Kreig does not claim that all the evils he describes can be blamed on the new chain ownership, he argues passionately that the pattern is persuasive. He supports the thesis of

Ben Bagdikian and other critics such as Robert Picard who warn that press concentration and monopoly may provide just as serious a threat to the flow of information as government. Kreig brings those generalities down to specifics.

Through more than 400 interviews and extensive research, Kreig raises questions about the managerial and journalistic skills of outside managers who design coverage and news for prizes. He also describes various unethical operations, including sexual pressure on the staff, fraudulent applications for journalism prizes, and cover-ups. The title of the book refers to the spiking of a major series of articles showing how insurance companies fought compensation for occupational accidents. Hartford, the home city of the *Courant*, is also the insurance capital of America.

As might be expected, the book has been attacked by the *Times* group, which refused to publish a lengthy letter-to-the-editor responding to the attack. One addition to the second edition is an "Afterword" in which Kreig describes petty things that *Courant* executives did to intimidate him.

The book has received negative or lukewarm responses from publications such as the *Columbia Journalism Review* and *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* for its "intemperate tone," and what appears to be "petty grudges and personal dislikes of editors." Such criticism focusing on the small trees of a rapidly changing journalistic landscape misses the main message of this book and the aggressive spirit of criticism that lives in the books by George Seldes, A.J. Liebling, Gay Talese, and others. One of the best summaries of the book comes from the *Journal Inquirer*, a smaller newspaper in the *Courant*'s circulation area which argued that the *Courant*'s response to *Spiked* confirmed the book's premise that "the power of a monopoly newspaper-group newspaper requires scrutiny, and that under the ownership by the Times-Mirror group, the *Courant*–Connecticutt's...only statewide newspaper – has not kept its great power under ethical control."

Alf Pratte Brigham Young University

Joseph C. Goulden. *Fit to Print: A.M. Rosenthal and His Times*. Secaucus, N.J.: Lyle Stuart Inc., 1988. 486 pp. $21.95.

A.M. Rosenthal's forty-year career at the New York *Times* made him the most powerful editor in American print journalism in the years after World War II. During those four decades American journalism in general, and the New York *Times* in particular, were transformed. Rosenthal's role in this transformation, and the use and abuse of the power he wielded, are important subjects for journalism historians.

This critical study was based on more than 300 interviews with Rosenthal associates, on the Turner Catledge Papers at Mississippi State University, and on some twenty hours of interviews with Rosenthal himself. Despite all the anecdotal information, however, this biography provides little insight into Rosenthal's career for two reasons. First, Goulden overstates the man's influence in determining changes in *Times* policy as opposed to executing them. Second, the author is primarily interested in portraying ad infinitum Rosenthal's notorious behavior in his relations with subordinates and in his personal affairs. Goulden's work is an example of what Joyce Carol Oates has called "pathography": biography that focuses on the seamy side of the subject's character and that makes an evaluation of the public persona's career as a secondary concern.

At the outset Goulden suggests that Rosenthal helped "save" the *Times* in the 1970s and notes his role in moving the newspaper politically to the right. Nonetheless Goulden himself provides evidence demonstrating the preeminent role of publisher Arthur Ochs "Punch" Sulzberger Jr. in 1976 in establishing special daily sections to attract affluent readers and advertisers, a development Rosenthal originally resisted. That same year it was Sulzberger who removed his cousin John Oakes as editor of the editorial page in order to reorient the *Times* in a more pro-business and conservative direction. Rosenthal's authority as executive editor was a testament to his success as an empire-builder; here too it was management policy to centralize editorial control by making the Sunday *Times* and especially the Washington bureau less autonomous. Finally, in 1986 Sulzberger denied Rosenthal's request that the mandatory retirement age be waived to permit him to remain executive editor. Sulzberger, not Rosenthal, was in charge.

Rosenthal's anti-communism and conservatism are well-known. Although many of the Rosenthal critics cited by Goulden are politically left-of-center, the author's own views seem to be to the right of Rosenthal's. He praises Rosenthal for ending an era when the *Times* was "a veritable playpen of the left." He nonetheless criticizes Rosenthal for being insufficiently hard-line.

Goulden does pay tribute to Rosenthal's considerable gifts as a reporter, but argues that his character made him a tyrannical editor. He provides countless descriptions of Rosenthal's pettiness, temper tantrums, and arbitrary actions. The widely known ostracizing of Richard Severo was only the tip of the iceberg. Rosenthal's tenure as editor may have led to the departure of some of the *Times'* most talented reporters.

However, in Goulden's tabloid treatment of Rosenthal, his scandalous behavior overshadows his impact as editor. Goulden devotes a great deal of attention to Rosenthal's drinking, the failure of his marriage, his lengthy affair with Katherine Balfour, and his remarriage

to Shirley Lord.

Goulden's book falls short on all levels–psychological, political, and historical. Despite all the personal details, it does not provide a deep psychological portrait. Goulden's crude political approach makes him ill-equipped to deal with such questions as Rosenthal's relationship to neo-conservatism. Finally, the author fails to compare his subject to other legendary editors like Carr Van Anda and Turner Catledge, and to situate Rosenthal's tenure in the larger context of the history of the *Times*.

Ralph Engelman Long Island University

Paul Heyer. *Communications and History: Theories of Media, Knowledge, and Civilization*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1988. 197 pp. Cloth. $37.95.

The history of civilization is the history of communications. It's a bold, provocative thesis, one to which Harold A. Innis devoted his scholarship and life. In works such as *Empire and Communications* and *The Bias of Communication*, the Canadian economic historian strove to capture the relationship between civilization and the technology of information.

Paul Heyer, associate professor of communication at Canada's Simon Fraser University, works in the Innis tradition. His book, number ten in the series *Contributions to the Study of Mass Media and Communications*, traces three centuries of inquiry into the role of communications (information technology) in civilization, inquiry brought to greatest fulfillment thus far in the work of Innis.

Heyer's plan, he admits, is "pedestrian." He divides the book into three parts: the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In each, he meanders through decades and disciplines, stopping to consider those who consider the import of communications. He reviews Rousseau's thoughts on language and writing, Edward Tylor's research of communication within anthropology, Lewis Mumford's writings on technology and human development, and other writers as obscure as Lord Monboddo of Scotland and as unobscure as Marshall McLuhan. The insights are good, legitimate. Heyer's intellectual breadth is unquestionable.

But the task of selecting and assessing 300 years of thought about communications requires precise purpose and point of view. Without compass or map, indeed, without destination or direction, the historian is doomed to intellectural vagrancy. Heyer not only lacks direction; he appears to be untrue to his purpose. In an introduction, he claims his purpose is to map an "unacknowledged tradition," challenging what he

sees as a conventional assumption that the study of communications is rooted in the twentieth century. Yet that assumption is hardly conventional. And in his final pages he admits the "unacknowledged tradition" is presumptuous and perhaps "an attention-getting device." Stripped of this device then, the book is left without purpose, without drive, without inquiry. It quickly becomes an interesting but arbitrary intellectural exercise. What governed Heyer's selections? What led to exclusions? Nothing, it appears, but fancy.

Examples: The American sociologist Robert Park is placed nicely in the context of nineteenth-century German sociology, which Park studied. But, without explanation, Heyer gives less than a line to Park's compatriots in the Chicago school. Then, overlooking many modern students of communications, he devotes a chapter to Michael Focault, a writer who evidenced interest in myriad topics but precious little in communications. Heyer calls the inclusion "unusual," but it is undue, arbitrary. The reader soon sees the author is merely infatuated with discourse theory; the self-indulgence is exercised at the expense of the book.

So, predictably, Heyer ends up where he started: Innis. He says Innis is "the cartographer" who provides " a definitive blueprint for the study of communications/history." What remains unclear is the mapping that Heyer intends to provide. Does he expend all this scholarship merely to show that, yes, other people, in other times, have thought communications may be important?

Much work remains for those who wish to prove and improve the mettle of Innis' work; Heyer does recognize the challenge. But the unexplored savannah of technology, power, media, and civilization is vast and far reaching. Historians who set out without direction quickly become lost. Passion without purpose, insight without inquiry, will not go far.

Jack Lule University of Tulsa

Janice Winship. *Inside Women's Magazines*. New York: Unwin Hyman, 1987. 181 pp. Paper. $15.95.

Feminist scholars have recently been paying increasing attention to popular culture forms directed to women, especially non-feminists. For example, Janice Radway's studies of romance novels and Mary Ellen Brown's work on soap operas not only describe these forms but also tease out the ways in which they afford their audience pleasure. Janice Winship's study of contemporary British women's magazines aims to do much the same, although her descriptions are disorganized and superficial. Furthermore, her guesses about the pleasure are not persuasive–

partly because, having assumed (wrongly I believe) that her own experiences are typical, she derives her explanations of the joys of magazine reading entirely from her personal and somewhat quirky responses.

A long-time, if critical, fan of women's magazines, Winship did research on them as an undergraduate, and began, but never completed, a doctoral dissertation on them at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham, England. Her task was perhaps made more difficult by two factors: one, her acknowledged sense of being a "closet" feminist reader of a cultural form that seems to repudiate feminist politics and styles, and two, her interest in producing an explanation true to the Marxist and cultural studies vocabulary of Birmingham University but still a "good read" for nonacademics.

The centerpiece of the book is a trio of case studies on three very different magazines–*Woman's Own*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Spare Rib*. *Woman's Own*, published weekly for married British homemakers since 1932, exemplifies a peculiarly British institution, although Winship could have said more about the significance of its references to national unity and to the royal family. In 1972, eight years after Helen Gurley Brown took over the editorship of Hearst's *Cosmopolitan*, the British counterpart began offering itself as the magazine for sophisticated, working, young, "liberated" women, especially sexually liberated ones. Somewhat more valuable is the discussion of *Spare Rib*, described as providing "a heavy textured pudding, dingy in colour, and somewhat hard work on the jaws" (p. 123), rather than the sugary icing of commercial women's magazines.

Winship points out that in emphasizing what the individual can do for herself, advertising, fiction, editorials, and even the "agony aunties" advice columnists all ignore the lessons of history, ignore social relations, and ignore the gender, economic, and class barriers to individual achievement.

The book's historical material is superficial. One chapter, a highly abbreviated romp through the history of British women's magazines, is based on Cynthia White's extremely useful and comprehensive *Women's Magazines 1693-1968*. Another, on "selling and buying," a post-war history of commercial publishing companies inventing and discarding strategies for selling women's magazines, is overwritten and unclear.

Linda Steiner Governor's State University

Charles Whited. *Knight: Publisher in the Tumultuous Century*. New York: Dutton, 1988. 405 pp. Index. Cloth. $21.95.

Jack Knight was among the last of a vanished tribe of publishers

whose readers knew who they were, and held them personally and individually responsible for what their newspapers did, or failed to do. Even had he wanted to – and he did not – Knight's 2,000-odd weekly columns would have prevented him from blending into the corporate woodwork he fashioned during the long tumult between the 1920s and the 1980s.

For that reason alone, the Akron *Beacon Journal* heir's life and career are well worth studying. Charles Whited, author of a daily column in Knight-Ridder Corp.'s Miami *Herald* since the 1960s, has succeeded in constructing a generally admiring but far from sycophantic biography. Though not a professional historian, he uses speeches in the Knight Collection at the University of Akron Archives, memoirs of Knight colleagues, and timely interviews of elderly former staffers (sometimes just prior to their deaths) to etch a compelling portrait in personal as well as professional dimensions. Whited had access to Knight himself before the publisher died in 1981.

His Knight is a product of his times but a cut above them, resisting Babbitry, Republican orthodoxy, and Old Guard fantasies of individual self-sufficiency in print while indulging himself socially in casino gambling, amateur golf tourneys, and bridge games at the homes of fellow tycoons – acutely sensitive to threats to editorial freedom from criminal thugs, Latin dictators, and organized labor, but slow to recognize dangers to other, broader civil liberties posed by Joseph McCarthy and Richard Nixon. Whited is particularly convincing in re-creating the sometimes bizarre scenes of purchase negotiations and the vivid atmospherics of the cities on the make in which several early Knight newspaper acquisitions took place: the stench of Akron tire plants, the fury and the grime of Detroit, the raw milk in the diets of Miamians.

Whited's Knight backs down for no one, challenging everyone's views but leaving subordinates alone to do their jobs. He selects coldly effective, tough operatives, intimidates children, dismisses his young grandson's views, and appears to strike even his own brother as "ornery." But his character seems a response to his father's remoteness, the successive deaths of his three wives, and of his eldest son in World War II combat, and the murder by stabbing of the grandson.

Whited makes some historical errors – such as claiming that Alexander Hamilton defended John Peter Zenger – but the writing is so lucid, the anecdotes so pointed, that one wishes a comparable volume as readable, as critical, as germane as this were available to every reader of a newspaper served up by a publisher whose name he does not know.

David L. Anderson University of Northern Colorado

Marvin Olasky. *The Press and Abortion, 1838-1988*. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1988. 200 pp. Notes. Index. Cloth.

In *Prodigal Press: The Anti-Christian Bias of the American News Media*, Marvin Olasky took the press to task for one-sided coverage of matters important to conservative Christians, including abortion. In *The Press and Abortion*, he not only criticizes but also chronicles newspaper coverage of this sensitive issue over a long period of time. A journalism professor at the University of Texas, he gives fair warning of his point of view in the introduction, explaining that he will use the term "unborn child" in preference to "fetus" and dedicating the book to his parents, who, he writes, did not leave him unborn.

The book could hardly have been published at a more opportune time, as the U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments urging reconsideration of its landmark abortion decision, Roe v. Wade, and it tells a fascinating story that reaches back to the 1830s and the first newspaper advertisements for Madame Restell's Female Monthly Regulating Pills, purported to cure "all cases of suppression, irregularity, or stoppage of the menses, however obdurate, or from whatever causes produced." Olasky suggests that such ads might have made the difference between press profit and subsistence. Of the New York papers, only the *National Police Gazette* refused ads and exposed the abortionists.

Olasky admits that his history is dominated by references to New York-based newspapers, partly because of their availability. He also maintains that the New York newspapers have set the trends in successive stages of the abortion wars, as they advertised the services and products of abortionists from the 1830s through the 1860s, campaigned for anti-abortion legislation during the 1870s, published little on the topic during the early years of the twentieth century, and then began to promote the legitimization and eventual legalization of abortion. Olasky's careful analysis of coverage by the New York *Times* makes a good case in point.

The book includes forty-two pages of notes – hundreds of citations of newspaper stories from across the country. Still, the reader must wonder to what extent they accurately represent the nation's press. The book mentions no systematic content analysis. It also lacks a bibliography.

For recent years, Olasky cites stories containing false figures and misleading emphases. He sees the press as the willing agent of the pro-abortionists and suggests that, while the press helps to set public agendas, it is also evident that wielders of ideas and power set agendas for the press, which responds as frequently as it initiates.

Sherilyn Cox Bennion Humboldt State University

Mitchell Stephens. *A History of News: From the Drum to the Satellite.* New York: Viking, 1988. 401 pp. Index. Cloth. $24.95.

Too frequently journalism history has failed to offer a broad synthesis of time and space in studies that could be enlightened by such perspective. Like Robert Desmond in his multi-volume study of news reporting, Stephens pushes his subject across national boundaries and far back into time. Stephens, who previously wrote *Broadcast News* (1980) and co-authored *Writing and Reporting the News* (1986), employs his understanding of the nature of news to pursue the question: when we read or watch the news, "what else might we be seeing?" (p. 9) In this study, which is based on many primary and secondary sources, he provides some interesting answers to that question.

Stephens contributes to the history of news in a number of ways. He provides scope for the subject by examining the various forms news has taken over time. Spoken news, early and later types of printed news, and the electronic news media all fall within his purview. While inquiring into the "more enduring qualities of news" (p. 7), he is able to set aside a number of glib assumptions associated with the modern news media. His inquiry shows that many of the commonly considered attributes of news today are, in fact, quite old. The author brings a surprising unity to this vast and diverse subject by underscoring the "constancies over the centuries" of the gathering and presenting of news. Beneath that overarching theme of the book, he examines the many forms news has taken throughout history. In terms of what that inquiry covers, the author has much to say that is engaging and noteworthy. The same can be said for his handling other particular topics in the study ranging from speculation about man's obsession with news and the "human wireless telegraphy" of the South African Zulus to the objectivity of modern news.

Yet the book is frustrating in some other aspects. In part, this is due to its arrangement. It repeatedly jumps about from place to place and from the present to a variety of pasts. Although Stephens warns us that this leapfrogging will occur, it can become disconcerting. The volume also suffers from a lack of a strong contextual framework for the various times and places covered. Moreover, the treatment accorded a number of topics in the book fails to satisfy one's expectations. In his examination of "News and Revolution," for example, Stephens scarcely mentions the Russian Revolution of 1917 and overlooks others, even major ones that rocked Western Europe in the nineteenth century. Nor does he address the subject of news and revolutionary movements in the Europe of a century ago when no self-respecting revolutionary group was without news publications. Moreover, his discussion of "News Management and Manipulation," while interesting, is disappointing. He hardly considers those masters of news manipulation who have either dominated or

served governments in both democratic and totalitarian twentieth-century Western states. In fact, a number of topics one might expect to be given serious attention in this study receive only scant attention. Some are absent.

The problem is one of selection of material to include in this study, and that is a matter crucial to any work of history. Soundness of argument, cohesiveness of subject, and narrative flow all depend on selection. In this case, however, one is left to wonder why certain segments of history were included but not others. It remains a question, for example, why ancient India was slighted. The Roman Empire and various periods of traditional China all receive well-justified treatment that takes us back to the late centuries B.C. and the first millenium A.D., but India remains a void in the account. Yet between 200 B.C. and 300 A.D. India experienced a wave of invasions and a great expansion of trade. Following that, the Empire of the Imperial Gupta emerged and lasted until 550 A.D., a time during which the sub-continent experienced one of its "golden" ages. The author, however, chose only to compare the Roman Empire to China, saying that "in size, power and longevity" the ancient Chinese Empire was Rome's "one rival." (p. 68) At least fuller explanation is needed, and at best a more comprehensive comparative framework would help. The problem continues throughout the study. Consider the case of the Middle Ages. In this instance we find a good deal included on the Renaissance and post-Renaissance periods but little about the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries. Yet historians recognize the achievement of those centuries as one of the peaks of Western Civilization; and some, like Dietrich Gerhard, claim it was the formative period when the West developed its common culture. What role did the news have then? That question should be addressed in a history emphasizing "the seminal, but not definitive, journalistic activities of the English and the French, of Europeans in general...." (p. 16)

Any work of this scope will evoke criticism because of the many expectations and preferences that readers will have about so large a subject. Nevertheless, this is a major and, despite its serious flaws, a meritorious study because it helps to modify present-minded perceptions of the news media. Ultimately, it is the scope of the study, with all the problems it entails, that remains its distinguishing feature. In recent years Akira Iriye, Bernard Bailyn, John Hope Franklin, William H. McNeill, and other historians have called attention to the international potential of many historical subjects and to the wider vision that approach to history can afford. *A History of News* helps to internationalize a subject deserving of that perspective.

James D. Startt Valparaiso University

Harold A. Williams. *The Baltimore Sun, 1837-1987*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987. 418 pp. Cloth. $29.50.

The Baltimore *Sun* is the sole survivor of the major penny papers of the 1830s. So near Washington, the *Sun* and its offspring, the *Evening Sun* of H.L. Mencken, have played a role not unlike that of off-Broadway theater. From the beginning, the publishers played to a distinct audience in Baltimore, but kept one eye on the capital and reached toward the national and international arenas.

The *Sun*'s first distinction, at the age of sixteen weeks, derived from its orientation toward Washington. Amid the Panic of 1837, the *Sun* scooped six Baltimore papers in publishing President Martin Van Buren's message to Congress. Inspired by James Gordon Bennett's news-gathering innovations at the New York *Herald*, the *Sun*'s founder, Arunah S. Abell, had rushed the message from the capitol by courier and train in two hours, shattering the customary 24-hour lag.

Harold A. Williams' book is an institutional history, commissioned by the Sunpapers for their 150th anniversary. It is a useful documentary of the Baltimore media in the context of the city of Baltimore, and of the people who worked there. Williams himself is a former Sunday editor whose labors at the *Sun* lasted 41 years. His book blends past institutional histories (four staff members, including Mencken, labored on the 100th anniversary history published by Knopf in 1937), his own interviews with veteran staffers, boardroom minutes, Sunpapers on microfilm, published memoirs, and secondary sources.

Williams underscores the contributions of numerous Sunpaper men and women. Some were luminaries, such as Mencken, who cast his spell beginning in 1906, when he joined as Sunday editor. Although Williams relies mainly on Mencken's autobiographical works and on William Manchester's biography (1950), a few Meckenania are unearthed from oral history and microfilm. On February 10, 1938, during Mencken's three-month stint as editor, the *Evening Sun* editorial page published his anti-Roosevelt "Page of Dots" – a million dots representing federal "jobholders" multiplying at the rate of "one hundred an hour" (pp. 232-33).

Baltimore provided a jump start for careers in "Broadway" journalism at the New York *Times*. Turner Catledge (1927-29) got his break when he was sent to the *Sun*'s Washington bureau to replace a veteran who had "let his drinking get the better of him." Russell Baker (1947-53) started as a police reporter and eventually reached the *Sun*'s London bureau, where he covered Queen Elizabeth's coronation.

Some prominent names merely passed through. In 1907, Mark Twain toured the new building, causing the no-smoking rule to be suspended. Cigar in hand, he commented, "I even believe I could write something good in here myself." Edmund Wilson was recruited by Mencken in the

1920s to write opinion pieces. William Manchester started reporting for the *Evening Sun* in 1947 as a way to write his biography of Mencken.

Perhaps the book's rarest contributions are the anecdotes about lesser known yet important figures. Charles Grasty's vision and financial manipulations created the *Evening Sun* in 1910. Paul Patterson realigned the *Sun* so it could thrive in the 1930s and 1940s, winning nine Pulitzers. Philip Potter, the Washington investigative reporter, helped bring on the censure of Senator Joseph McCarthy.

One obvious problem with this genre of history – commissioned by an institution for its own commemoration – is the inherent bias. Williams assures the reader that present publisher Reg Murphy gave him "a free hand." Yet Williams divulges no corporate secrets. The role Murphy played in 1986 selling the Sunpapers to the Times Mirror Corp. is veiled. Williams defers to official minutes of meetings at the *Sun*, whereas the $600 million deal was hammered out elsewhere, then *announced* at the *Sun* when Murphy interrupted a meeting with an abrupt announcement: "It is the end of one dream, the beginning of another" (pp. 365-66).

Most of Williams' stories credit the Sunpapers and their owners, heirs of founder Arunah Abell (1806-88). The businessmen and news managers guided an 1830s penny paper into the modern era, attracted outstanding reporting and editing talents, and established a reputation for national and international news coverage with only an occasional error. On April 15, 1912, the *Evening Sun* ran the banner headline, "All Titanic Passengers Are Safe." When editors learned that 1,517 of the 2,000 had perished, they blamed wire-service reports (p. 146).

Another characteristic of institutional histories is the obligation to name as many people as possible. While the narrative suffers, it is a benefit to scholars of the era; the names of the least known reporters and board members are rescued.

Leonard Teel Georgia State University

Gita Siegman, editor. *World of Winners: A Current and Historical Perspective on Awards and Their Winners*. Detroit: Gale Research, Inc., 1989. 993 pp. $60.00.

This list of 75,000 winners of awards includes more than 12,000 winners of mass media awards such as the Pulitzer Prizes, Oscars, and Emmys.

Sam G. Riley, editor. *American Magazine Journalists, 1850-1900*. Detroit: Gale Research Inc., 1989. 402 pp. $98.00.

This volume, containing biographies of fifty editors and publishers, is the second in a three-volume encyclopedic series and is part of Gales' continuing *Dictionary of Literary Biography*.

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FROM THE EDITOR •

THE EDITOR'S CHAIR has often been thought a respite from the world, a place for quiet reflection on the affairs of the day. Ensconced between its leather wings, snug in a panelled office overlooking a garden, the editor spins a web of words and waits for the world to come to him.

What a quaint and affecting nineteenth-century dream that is! Anyone who has sat in an editor's chair recently knows better. The editor sits atop a precarious perch, in an unlikely position of uncertain authority, an inviting target for catcalls, caterwauls, and catastrophe. I sit down now with some trepidation, but with a renewed appreciation for how well David Sloan has filled that chair these last five years. He has given *American Journalism* stature, credibility, and rigor. Our organization's gratitude and respect seem small recompense indeed for all his hard work and devotion.

My thanks go out as well to Jim Startt and Nick Nickerson, who recently stepped down after serving so well (and so long, it must seem to them) as associate editor and book review editor. A full introduction to the new cast and crew will have to wait till the winter issue.

American Journalism has taken this occasion to revamp its look. Sharon Bass imagined a more elegant design years ago, but until recently the journal could not technologically accomplish it. Now Sharon and her assistant, Bess Frimodig, have given the journal a literate yet conversational feel. Their design opens *American Journalism* to many more voices, but continues to honor our organization's sense of tradition.

Most of the revisions appear in this issue, but other surprises, I hope, still await the reader.

– J.P.

MAGAZINE PUBLISHING AND POPULAR SCIENCE AFTER WORLD WAR II

How Magazine Publishers Tried to Capitalize on the Public's Interest in Science and Technology

Bruce V. Lewenstein

NEAR THE END OF WORLD WAR II, an informal coalition of scientists, educators, and others in America's intellectual community issued a call for more "popular science." Citing the scientific and technological products of the war—including jet engines, penicillin, radar, synthetic rubber, and, of course, the atom bomb—these self-appointed spokesmen for "the public" declared that there was a "demand" for more information about science, a demand for more public understanding of science. Over the next twenty years, several groups in society responded to this demand, including scientific organizations, science writers, and government agencies.[1]

The first to respond were commercial magazine publishers. Indeed, by early 1945 at least two publishers had started popular science projects. Both were driven, in part, by an ideological commitment to science as the source of hope and authority in the new postwar world. Constrained by commercial pressures, however, both put most of their efforts into identifying and serving an appropriate "public" for popular science. The stories of these two publishing projects, *Science Illustrated* and the new *Scientific American*, reveal this interplay of intellectual and economic constraints in publishing projects intended to serve broad social goals.

At the same time, the stories shed light on the state of American magazine publishing in the years after World War II. Those were years of increasing specialization in publishing, and the story of *Science Illustrated* and *Scientific American* illustrates how mid-century magazine publishers tried to meet the new economic challenges that confronted them.

Bruce Lewenstein is an assistant professor at Cornell University, with appointments in the Department of Communication and in the Program on the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology. His research covers the history of public communication of science in the mid-to-late twentieth century. He is currently co-directing a National Science Foundation-sponsored "Cold Fusion Archive," which contains mass media, electronic network, manuscript, and interview data.

1. Much of the supporting material for this paper appears in my dissertation, "'Public Understanding of Science' in the United States, 1945–1965" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1987). For the issue of "demand," see 25–78.

ASSERTING THE EXISTENCE OF A MARKET

Early in 1945 the New York technical trade publisher James H. McGraw, Jr., decided to create a new magazine in the "mechanical" field. It would "break with tradition and enter the field with a book as modern as tomorrow, all the way from editorial content to art treatment and printing."[2] McGraw-Hill was then one of the world's largest publishers of trade magazines for carefully defined industrial audiences. McGraw, son of the firm's founder, believed that this corporate expertise could be a successful base for the company's first venture into consumer publishing—that is, producing magazines for the "general public."

Yet initial descriptions of the new magazine, produced by Willis Brown, a former *Popular Mechanics* general manager hired by McGraw to run the new project, did not differ significantly from the existing "mechanical" magazines such as *Popular Science* and *Popular Mechanics*. More than two-thirds of the space would be devoted to columns about new products, television, automobiles, and home crafts. Whatever space remained might be used for "virtually any subject which is pictorial [and] of interest to hundreds of thousands of men."[3]

Although a team of McGraw-Hill executives enthusiastically took up the plans, the McGraw-Hill board of directors did not agree to support the project. The company's records do not explain why the board rejected McGraw's proposal, but it was probably because the economic rationale for the project was not clear. The new magazine would require an operating budget of nearly a quarter of a million dollars a year, and the magazine's backers needed to show that it would be profitable before it could proceed.[4]

At the same time, unknown to the McGraw-Hill team, a newcomer to publishing was also thinking about a science-oriented magazine. Gerard Piel, an Andover- and Harvard-trained journalist, had been science editor of *Life* magazine since 1939. He had been tutored at Harvard by one of the founders of the

2. Willis Brown, "New Publication in the Mechanical Field," n.d., *Science Illustrated* files, McGraw-Hill Corporate Resource Center, New York, especially 1, 7–8, 10–11, 14; and Willis S. Brown, letter to author, 15 June 1986 (Willis S. Brown, the son of Willis Brown, also worked for McGraw-Hill). For a hagiographic study of McGraw-Hill, see Roger Burlingame, *Endless Frontiers: The Story of McGraw-Hill* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959).

3. Brown, "New Publication," 12–13. For an introduction to the structure of magazine publishing, see Theodore Peterson, *Magazines in the Twentieth Century*, 2d ed. (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1964); James L. C. Ford, *Magazines for the Millions: The Story of Specialized Publications* (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969); and Roland E. Wolseley, *Understanding Magazines*, 2d ed. (Ames, Ia.: Iowa State University Press, 1969).

4. Howard Ehrlich et al. to James H. McGraw, Jr., 30 March 1945, *Science Illustrated* files; and Ehrlich, "Report and Recommendations re: McGraw-Hill Entry into the Science Field of Publishing," 31 October 1945, *Science Illustratea* files.

sociology of science, and he had a deep appreciation of how science fit into the complex web of human activity. During the 1940s, as Piel developed his working relationships with scientists, he observed two things: scientists of all disciplines were intensely interested in the stories he prepared for *Life*; and nowhere could he find a place to read about the developments of science in a wide range of fields. He began to mull over the idea of publishing a magazine to fill this need.[5]

In late 1944, determined to play an active role in setting science policy in the postwar era, Piel took a position with industrialist Henry Kaiser, who had extensive government contacts. Just before Piel left his old job, fellow *Life* editor Dennis Flanagan commented, "What this country needs is a good magazine about science." Piel quickly suggested that they team up. They arranged for Flanagan to take over Piel's position as science editor at *Life*, to give him more exposure to a field with which he had only a passing acquaintance.[6]

Piel left *Life* in January 1945. For the next year, as he worked for Kaiser, he and Flanagan continued to discuss their plans. They met weekly with another friend, Donald H. Miller, Jr. Miller provided the business background that neither Piel nor Flanagan had.[7]

Meanwhile, the McGraw-Hill executives were continuing their efforts to create a new magazine, despite the board of directors' refusal to commit the company to the project. In April 1945 McGraw spent $37,500 in personal funds to buy a magazine named *Science Illustrated*. He hired an editorial troika, each of whom could reasonably expect to be "the" editor. Each of the three editors brought a different perspective to the magazine, presaging a conflict of goals that would plague the magazine's first years. Harley Magee championed the mechanical, applied-technology perspective of *Popular Mechanics*. Gerald Wendt, a prominent chemical researcher who had devoted himself to popularizing science and had served as science and education director of the 1939 New York World's Fair, passionately believed in the need to explain basic research to the public. Dexter Masters, a founding editor of *Consumer Reports*, supported ef-

Some articles Piel ran while science editor at *Life*:

- Diseases Are Diagnosed by Crystallized Blood
- Technicians Design Model Rockets Hoping for Transatlantic Flight
- New Rubber-like Plastic Binder Makes Safety Glass That Bends
- Camera Stops 37-mm. Shell in Flight
- Army Engineers Design Blackout Illumination
- Fire: Its Basic Principles and Chemistry
- Electricity and Life
- Dutch Elm Disease

5. Gerard Piel, oral history, 23 September 1986, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, 14–19, 21ff.; Hillier Krieghbaum, "American Newspaper Reporting of Science News," *Kansas State College Bulletin* 25 (1941): 1–73; Dennis Flanagan, "Gerard Piel: President-Elect of the AAAS," *Science*, 27 July 1985, 385–87; Dennis Flanagan, oral history, 26 February 1986, Columbia University Oral History Research Office, New York; "Gerard Piel of *Scientific American*: The Story of a 'Remarkable Venture,'" *Printer's Ink*, 10 October 1958, 57–60; and Piel, letter to author, 27 July 1987.

6. Piel, oral history, 3–9, 14–15, 22–29; Flanagan, oral history, 1–2, 49; "Gerard Piel of *Scientific American*," 57–59; and David Hollinger, "The Defense of Democracy and Robert K. Merton's Formulation of the Scientific Ethos," *Knowledge and Society* 4 (1983): 1–15.

7. Piel, oral history, 29–32.

forts to control science and harness it directly to social needs.[8]

McGraw came to see the new magazine more and more as devoted to science, not technical gadgets. The audience ranged from "Vermont farm boys" whose military work made them "more interested in the measurement of microseconds than in milking," to business and industrial executives "brought face-to-face with the challenge and opportunities of new materials, methods, [and] equipment developed by science." Ultimately, McGraw cited a pool of twenty-six million potential subscribers, from which he hoped to draw one million.[9]

Despite his own enthusiasm, however, McGraw could find no advertisers. By the late summer of 1945 his investment in *Science Illustrated* seemed to be a poor one.

"'Too many people,' Piel has remarked, 'are clamoring about the need to humanize the scientist....There is more humanity in their systems, a more intense and real awareness of life than in most non-scientists. To me, the more urgent need is to teach the humanists science.'"
– *Printers' Ink*, 10 October 1958.

A STROKE OF GOOD FORTUNE

The war was coming to a close, but the commercial publishers had not yet found the formula that would let them serve the need they perceived for a popular science magazine. "Then in August 1945 came an *accident* that completely upset all calculations—the Atomic Bomb," a management consultant later reported. "It blasted the importance of science into the minds of the general public. It suddenly developed a new and sure audience of advertisers and readers."[10]

When returns from an October 1945 promotional mailing for *Science Illustrated* reached a 9 percent return rate (more than quadruple the expected number of orders), McGraw once again proposed that McGraw-Hill publish a popular science magazine. But this time he offered to sell to the company his personal entry in the field, *Science Illustrated*.[11]

An outside consultant, J. K. Lasser, evaluated the proposal for the McGraw-Hill board and enthusiastically recommended it. In doing so, he expressed a moral commitment to science held by much of the business community. The new magazine, said Lasser (frequently parroting McGraw's own words), would "*describe* the *peacetime* horizons of scientific progress in the public's own terms":

8. Ehrlich to McGraw, 30 March 1946; Russell F. Anderson, letter to author, 14 March 1986 (Anderson was a McGraw-Hill news executive who contributed international news to *Science Illustrated*); Burlingame, *Endless Frontiers*, 372–73; Edward L. Hutchings, taped interview, 11 September 1986, Pasadena, Calif. (Hutchings was hired by Masters to be managing editor of *Science Illustrated*); Proctor Mellquist, interview, 21 July 1986, Los Altos Hills, Calif. (Mellquist succeeded Hutchings as managing editor of *Science Illustrated*); J. K. Lasser Co. to McGraw-Hill Publishing Co., 20 October 1945, *Science Illustrated* files (hereafter cited as Lasser Report), 16; Flanagan, oral history, 13–15; Willis S. Brown, letters to author, 15 June and 11 July 1986; and Gerald Wendt, "Impact," *Science Illustrated* 1 (April 1946): 10.

9. Lasser Report, 4–5, 11.

10. Lasser Report, 7. Unless otherwise noted, all italicized words in quotes were emphasized in the original.

11. Ehrlich, "Report and Recommendations," 31 October 1945, 10.

> In virtually every move an individual makes these days is reflected the work and products of our science, and yet nowhere could the individual—the average citizen—find in his own terms a reporting or an interpreting of what the scientists are doing, what they are beginning which will soon be affecting our lives.[12]

The magazine would "bridge the gap between the scientific world and the average citizen."

More than any other event, the dropping of the atomic bomb created the potential audience for a magazine about science, Lasser said. He titled one section of his report, "FREAK ACCIDENT THAT NOW GIVES THE PUBLICATION A MUCH GREATER VALUE THAN AT ITS ACQUISITION BY MR. MCGRAW." He noted,

> The publication is a strange child of fortune. It now has an assured potential circulation of well over a million people—all based upon a stroke of good fortune—the apparent proof that it can capture the new science-minded readership, which was greatly stimulated during the war years *but became readers actually* only with the announcement of the Atomic Bomb.[13]

Neither Lasser's report nor McGraw's plans addressed in detail the advertising side of the publishing equation. They did not explore how a magazine designed to appeal to as broad a cross section of the country as possible would appeal to advertisers with technical products (who, according to their own plans, were the most likely advertisers in a technically oriented magazine). That did not seem to matter. They perceived an editorial logic and a clear social need for a project of this sort, both sufficiently strong to propel the proposal without an elaborate financial plan.

Within ten days of Lasser's report, McGraw-Hill purchased *Science Illustrated*, paying McGraw $140,000 plus 15 percent of all profits above $50,000 for twenty-five years. It scheduled the first issue for April 1946.[14]

Over the next six months, Brown's folly in hiring three editors became apparent. Magee scheduled how-to articles and features on "gee-whiz" science. Masters, who had served as an editor at MIT's Radiation Laboratory during World War II, pushed for articles on basic science and important social issues. Wendt, though he supported Masters's instincts, proved to be an aloof, uninvolved editor, valuable more for his contacts in the scientific community than his skills at editorial management.[15]

---

12. Lasser Report, 1–2.
13. Lasser Report, 8. Lasser is surely one of the few to consider the bomb "good fortune."
14. "The [McGraw-Hill] Bulletin," special edition, November 1945, *Science Illustrated* files; and Ehrlich, "Report and Recommendations," 10.
15. Wendt, "Impact," 10; Rae Goodell, *The Visible Scientists* (Boston: Little

Initially, at least, the Masters-Wendt camp won. Articles in the first few issues dealt with topics such as the National Science Foundation, cancer, atomic energy, and geology—all "serious" science, all topics welcome to the scientific community. The magazine appealed to the intellectuals as well, who expressed the hope that it would address itself to "the social lag between invention and employment of invention." With Masters seen as its leader (lauded for his knowledge of "humane concepts"), *Science Illustrated* might become a "big magazine...carrying weight in human affairs."[16]

"Sophisticated publishers know, of course, that the big money isn't in the girlie books. As a matter of fact, the really big money seems to be only in the right-side-of-the-tracks magazines. Magazines in our moralistic culture have to have a good purpose. That's what makes ministers' sons like Luce or Wallace good at editing magazines."
– David Munro, "Magazine Ferment"

The magazine had a strong start, selling nearly 150,000 copies of its first issue on the newsstands. But then the McGraw-Hill staff, unskilled in producing and selling consumer magazines, blundered. Their newsstand distribution and subscription fulfillment systems were quickly overwhelmed. Perhaps more damaging, the editors blundered with their first few cover designs. The first three covers were montages, difficult to distinguish from one another. According to analyses made later by McGraw-Hill executives, consumers glancing at the second and third issues on the newsstand and in mailboxes thought that they had already read the magazine.[17]

These problems proved disastrous. Sales plummeted, advertisers turned away, and the magazine started on a road of difficulty that it never left. In early May the company instituted a few quick fixes, which did halt the embarrassing slide in circulation. But the fixes also pushed the magazine away from the dedication to science and serious journalism that Masters and Wendt advocated. It went instead toward the "gee-whiz" and "mechanical" approach McGraw and Magee preferred.[18]

The cover revealed the dramatic changes. To recover newsstand circulation, the fourth (July 1946) issue featured a scantily clad, buxom young lady reclining provocatively on the beach, to illustrate a story on ultraviolet radiation and suntans. The following issue was even more blatant, displaying a second bathing beauty atop a bright red motor scooter—an illustration tied only to a three-sentence new-product announcement near the back of the magazine. Though these photos undoubtedly

Brown, 1977), 63–64; Flanagan, oral history, 13–15; Hutchings interview; Mellquist interview; Russell Anderson, telephone interview, 24 February 1986, Essex, Conn.; and Ehrlich to McGraw, 30 March 1945, 3.

16. David A. Munro, "Magazine Ferment," *New Republic*, 15 April 1946, 500–502; Mellquist interview. In an argument contrary to my own, historian Matthew Whalen has suggested that *Science Illustrated* may be a crucial instance of the conjunction between popular science and popular scientism, which suggests an appeal to a less-than-intellectual audience. See Whalen, "Science, the Public, and American Culture: A Preface to the Study of Popular Science," *Journal of American Culture* 4 (1981): 14–26, esp. 20, 25.

17. G. J. Seamen to Don Roy, 16 October 1946, *Science Illustrated* files; Anderson, letter to author, 14 March 1986; and Hutchings interview.

18. McGraw-Hill Executive Order No. 307, 7 May 1946, *Science Illustrated* files; and Hutchings interview.

drew in some readers, they also alienated many of the more intellectual readers and advertisers.[19]

Meanwhile, Piel, Flanagan, and Miller had been working on their plans. Piel had left the Kaiser payroll in the spring of 1946 to spend full time searching for startup capital. Then he and his colleagues had learned about *Science Illustrated* and had decided to give up their plans. It was clear to them that a company with McGraw-Hill's financial and editorial resources would overwhelm them. They agreed to meet once more to reconsider their decision.

At their next meeting, after *Science Illustrated*'s first issue had appeared, they toasted *Science Illustrated* with glee. Looking at the new magazine, they decided that McGraw-Hill would not only fail to reach the technical audience to which they thought popular science ought to be directed, but that *Science Illustrated* would be hampered by its "gee whiz" approach to science. They took bets about which issue of *Science Illustrated* would carry on its cover a picture of a woman in a bathing suit—a bet later won by the partner who picked number four. Piel returned to his fund-raising with gusto.[20]

Piel and Flanagan were especially interested in technical readers, in the scientists they had discovered reading the science section of *Life*. The goal of their new magazine would be

> to serve the need of the scientist, the engineer, the doctor, the educator and the intelligent layman for information concerning the progress of science, engineering, and medicine in all their branches and in their application at the social and economic level to the lives of all men.[21]

Despite their own training as journalists for a mass-circulation magazine (*Life* was then one of the largest magazines in the country), they perceived their new venture as a magazine for a particular, limited audience. Unlike the founders of *Science Illustrated*, they had no illusions about their ability to capture the imagination of huge numbers of readers who had only peripheral interest or background in science. Their definition of popular science had a specific audience in mind—the nation's scientific and technological leadership.

But, in a crucial step, they recognized that "the common de-

Article titles from the April 1946 issue of *Science Illustrated*:

- The Atom Bomb Test
- Scientists of the USSR
- Cancer: Science Will Win the War
- Man Against the Cold
- Rats: Deadly Poisons for a Pest
- Long Step Forward: GE Makes Mesons
- Autos: What's Happening with 1947 Models
- Adhesives:The New Glues Hold Anything

19. Forty years later, recalling the incident, a number of different publishers commented derisively on the "swimsuit" cover. Gerard Piel, interview, 5 May 1986, New York; Anderson interview, 24 February 1986; Hutchings interview; and Mellquist interview.

20. Piel, oral history, 40; Flanagan, oral history, 12–15.

21. "Proposal for a Monthly Science Magazine" [1946], Scientific American, Inc., corporate archives, New York (hereafter cited as *Scientific American* archives), file cabinet 2, "Summary 1946" folder, 1. References to the *Scientific American* archives are based on a finding aid maintained by *Scientific American* staffer Lorraine Terlecki; I would like to thank Gerard Piel for allowing me to examine the archives and Mrs. Terlecki for providing access to the records

nominator of this audience is the interested layman: the scientific professional who is a layman in departments outside his own." Piel and Flanagan had made the essential distinction between a mass public and a more limited audience. To call a limited audience a public is certainly an appropriate and common use of the term; the partners' success was in understanding that "a" public was not the same as "the" public.[22]

Support from the scientific community reaffirmed the partners' sense that a magazine of popular science would have its base within the scientific community. In 1946 more than sixty well-known scientists responded to a call for support. Many compared the proposed new magazine to the *Scientific Monthly* and *American Scientist*, both magazines published for the members of particular organizations.[23]

The partners planned to sell subscriptions to scientists, engineers, professional workers, and business owners and executives. The magazine would appeal to these readers because "we'll add a new dimension to industry," the partners wrote. "Through industry, in the enormous scope of its operations, science has become the very fabric of modern life and material basis of our culture."[24]

By defining the audience as one with professional interest in science, Piel and Flanagan did two things. They committed themselves to an editorial policy that had to be acceptable to the scientific community, and they defined an audience that would appeal to the industrial advertisers they hoped to attract. Given the financial structure of magazine publishing, that appeal was important to their ultimate success.

Piel and Flanagan were not alone in their perception of a specialized audience. After World War II the market for subscription-based specialized magazines boomed. Because successful consumer magazines such as *Time*, *Life*, and *Reader's Digest* had extremely large audiences, these general-interest media had to cover such broad topics that they could no longer concentrate on any particular subject. New magazines met this need; between 1943 and 1963, special-interest magazine circulation more than tripled. Piel and Flanagan provide a specific example of how these specialized publications came to be.[25]

Special-interest magazines begun since 1945:

Ebony (1945)

U.S. News and World Report (1948)

TV Guide (1948)

Motor Trend (1949)

Prevention (1950)

High Fidelity (1951)

Mad (1952)

Playboy (1953)

American Heritage (1954)

Sports Illustrated (1954)

National Review (1955)

Bon Appetit (1956)

Flower and Garden (1957)

Modern Maturity (1958)

Guns and Ammo (1958)

Golf (1959)

22. "An Announcement to Our Readers," *Scientific American* 177 (December 1947): 244.

23. Book of letters, 1947, *Scientific American* archives, file cabinet 2.

24. Unlabeled notes, n.d., *Scientific American* archives, file cabinet 2, blue "editorial" folder; "Introduction to *The Sciences*" [1947], *Scientific American* archives, file cabinet 2, "Announces the Forthcoming Publication" folder, 2, 5; "Proposal for a Monthly Science Magazine" [1946]; and "*The Sciences*: A Prospectus in the Form of a Dialogue" [1947], *Scientific American* archives, file cabinet 2, "Announces the Forthcoming Publication" file. The source of the audience figures is, unfortunately, not clear. Thus they cannot be compared easily with the figures used by McGraw-Hill for *Science Illustrated*, which were also of unknown provenance.

25. Peterson, 363–401, esp. 401.

By the spring of 1947, the plans for the magazine launch were well-advanced. But the partners could not raise enough funds. The new magazine, which they were calling *The Sciences*, faced a great deal of competition for money, for "the woods were thick with new magazine ideas then." Once again the partners wondered what to do.[26]

SLOW DEATH OF *SCIENCE ILLUSTRATED*

About this time McGraw invited Piel to lunch. In the year since its opening debacle, *Science Illustrated* had gone through a series of editorial staffs, without success. More disheartening, the advertisers whose support was crucial were losing interest in the magazine. McGraw thought that Piel, rather than starting his own magazine, might better work to save *Science Illustrated*.[27] But Piel realized that McGraw's populist vision for *Science Illustrated* did not match his own technocratic goals. McGraw wanted a magazine that would appeal to a mass consumer audience. Piel and his colleagues were trying to appeal to a select group already committed to science. Thanking McGraw for the meal, Piel turned down the offer.[28]

Over the next two and a half years, McGraw-Hill tried a series of staff changes, magazine redesigns, and new editorial approaches to regain momentum. Most of these changes aimed at making *Science Illustrated* less "highbrow," to meet criticisms that the magazine was too far removed from its readers.[29] Unlike Piel and his colleagues, McGraw-Hill executives had little background in science. Perhaps because of their experience in technical publishing, McGraw-Hill staffers saw science as a product, not as an intellectual subject. Thus they accepted the relatively naive argument that science could always be described in terms of its ultimate benefits to society.[30]

At the end of 1946, McGraw-Hill appointed one of its most senior executives, Paul Montgomery, as publisher of the magazine. Montgomery, who continued as publisher of the company's flagship *Business Week*, named McGraw-Hill circulation executive Shelton Fisher as his "deputy" in circulation and

26. "Introduction to *The Sciences*" [1947]; "Gerard Piel of *Scientific American*," 59–60; Munro, "Magazine Ferment"; Bradley Dewey to Bernard Baruch, 9 June 1947, *Scientific American* archives, file cabinet 2, "Finance" folder; "*Scientific American*—A Case of Clicking," *Tide*, 5 September 1952; and Warren Weaver, "Understanding Science," 12 October 1948, Rockefeller Foundation archives, RG1.1, ser. 200F, box 175, folder 2124, Rockefeller Archive Center, North Tarrytown, N.Y.

27. J. K. Lasser to Henry G. Lord, 18 October 1946; Tom Maloney, "A Report on *Science Illustrated*: 1946. Results and Prospects for 1947," n.d.; and Seamen to Roy, 16 October 1946, 3, all in *Science Illustrated* files. Mellquist interview.

28. Piel, oral history, 40–42.

29. Shelton Fisher to Eugene Duffield, 24 November 1946, *Science Illustrated* files, 5.

30. Fisher to Duffield, 24 November 1946; Hutchings interview; and Mellquist interview.

editorial matters. Fisher quickly put his stamp on the organization. *Science Illustrated* became even more picture-oriented, more tied to presenting the direct links between science, technology, and everyday life. These changes did not sit well with those on the staff who preferred to define science as "basic" or "fundamental" research, and many left.[31]

By 1949 McGraw-Hill had invested $4.5 million in *Science Illustrated.* The magazine had reached a circulation of about 500,000, only half its original goal. Even if it continued to improve its numbers—more circulation and sales, fewer newsstand returns—it could not hope to recover its investment. In addition, international tensions were making the business community conservative about financial risks; and tensions within the McGraw family were restricting the ability of James H. McGraw, Jr., to act decisively. Within a year he would be forced out of the company.[32]

On 15 June 1949 McGraw-Hill announced to the staff that *Science Illustrated* would fold. In the public announcement two days later, McGraw-Hill blamed high printing costs and insufficient advertising income. The problem, Montgomery said, was that although the publishers thought they could provide "a clear picture of their audience, it was difficult for advertisers to define that audience in terms of a market for specified products." Unfortunately, "not all publications which are genuinely interesting to specific kinds of readers can be made financially attractive to specific kinds of advertisers."[33] *Science Illustrated* had failed to demonstrate the existence of a market for information about science, within the economic constraints imposed by a mass-circulation magazine. At the same time, the scientific community had shown its unease with a publication not devoted to treating science as a search for basic or pure knowledge.

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Barry Commoner on his tenure with *Science Illustrated*: "The magazine started out to do a serious job along the lines later made successful by *Scientific American.* I joined the staff on that basis and was one of a group on it that struggled, unsuccessfully, with the McGraw-Hill management to keep on that path. [I] spent many anguished months in this struggle."

– Rae Goodell, *Visible Scienists.*

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THE NEW *SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN*

To Piel and his partners, the "abrupt demise" of *Science Illustrated* provided new opportunities. Shortly after McGraw's meeting with Piel, the partners had purchased the moribund,

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31. Paul Montgomery to *Science Illustrated* staff, 13 December 1946, *Science Illustrated* files; Goodell, *Visible Scientists,* 63–64; and Mellquist interview. One of those who left was Barry Commoner, who became a famous biologist and popularizer himself.

32. Shelton Fisher, oral history, 23 April 1956, 10, McGraw-Hill Corporate Resource Center, New York (the Columbia University Oral History Research Office, which prepared the interview, also holds a copy); Mellquist interview; Brown, letter to author, 15 June 1986; Russell Anderson, letter to author, 14 March 1986; and Anderson interview, 24 February 1986.

33. "*Science Illustrated* to Board," penciled note, n.d.; untitled memo, 8 June 1949, H. G. Strong to Eugene S. Duffield, 21 June 1949; untitled press release, 17 June 1949; and Paul Montgomery to advertisers, mimeographed memorandum, 17 June 1949, all in *Science Illustrated* files. *Wall Street Journal,* 18 June 1949, 8; *Time,* 27 June 1949, 45; *Newsweek,* 27 June 1949, 62. I have been told that the sounds of

103-year-old *Scientific American*, which had survived the war only by possessing a paper allotment that allowed it to print ads that advertising agencies could not fit elsewhere. The partners calculated that buying an existing publication cut capital needs by nearly half, since the existing magazine's name recognition and circulation of forty thousand would relieve the new venture of many start-up costs.[34] Although one advisor warned Piel that he was miscalculating, the investors agreed to the revised plans. On 27 April 1948 the partners released the first complete issue of their new magazine.[35]

"The highest aim of the new *Scientific American* will be to present scientific knowledge to the end that science shall occupy the same place in the mind of every thinking citizen that it occupies as an integral part of our modern civilization."
– "An Announcement to Our Readers," March 1948.

The partners thought the core of readers inherited from the old *Scientific American* would make it easy to reach an audience of 100,000, well above the number needed to be profitable. To locate new subscribers, they solicited scientists, university professors, United Nations staff, and other leaders of the modern world. Although these people represented the technological and scientific leadership Piel and his partners presumed would be attracted to the new magazine, initial direct-mail promotion returns did not bear out their enthusiasm.[36]

Successful promotion became even more crucial when it turned out that the supposed "core" of forty thousand old *Scientific American* readers did not exist. Nearly 60 percent of the subscribers turned out to be bars, restaurants, barber shops, and other locations that had received their subscriptions from magazine subscription salesmen in trade for meals or haircuts. Another 25 percent of the circulation came from newsstand sales, an unreliable source of readers for a magazine changing formats and seeking a limited audience. About 10 percent came from libraries, which were important in the long run but did not provide the kind of audience advertisers wanted to see. Piel later

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Science Illustrated's failure "still echo through the halls of McGraw-Hill." The company has never ventured again into the general consumer magazine publishing business.

34. Howard Meyerhoff to Gerard Piel, 30 June 1949, Catherine Borras papers (hereafter cited as Borras Papers), box 9, "The Scientific American Inc., 1949–1955" folder, American Association for the Advancement of Science archives, Washington, D.C.; Flanagan, oral history, 10–11; Piel, oral history, 33; and "Forecast: *Scientific American* under Management of The Sciences, Inc." [1947], *Scientific American* archives, file cabinet 2.

35. Excerpt from Warren Weaver diary, 3 September 1947, Rockefeller Foundation archives, RG1.1, ser. 200F, box 175, folder 2124; Piel, oral history, 33–34; and Piel to Stearns Morse, 5 September 1947, *Scientific American* archives, file cabinet 2, "Clippings" file; and sheet labeled "April 27th, 3:30 p.m.," and Gerard Piel to William Betinck-Smith, 30 June 1948, both in *Scientific American* archives, circulation department files.

36. Flanagan to Mrs. Otto Laporte, 14 April 1948, *Scientific American* archives, Dennis Flanagan files. Rush Elliott to Gerard Piel, 11 February 1949; Piel to Rush Elliott, 23 February 1949; Helen Wood Landowska to Elsie Phillips, 2 September 1948; Piel to Norman A. Schuele, Jr., 9 September 1948; and Pete Irwin to Piel, Donald H. Miller, Jr., and C. L. Stong, 16 March 1949, all in *Scientific American* archives, circulation department files.

estimated that only about one thousand people actually purchased and read the old magazine.[37]

In one particularly cruel irony, Piel discovered that the *Scientific American* name actually *decreased* response to direct-mail promotion. The old magazine had acquired such a bad reputation that he had to suppress the name to get acceptable response rates. Not until the end of 1949, after having built circulation with promotional mailings to 3.5 million potential readers and published nearly two years of new editorial product, did his circulation consultants advise him "that the new *Scientific American* has proven itself....We're ready now for a logo letter."[38]

Turning from circulation to advertising, Piel drew more sharply his image of a particular public. He appealed to advertisers looking for readers who "by virtue of their special line of interest...occupy the strategic positions and carry the critical responsibilities in our nation's day-to-day work and progress." Unlike *Science Illustrated*, which considered its audience to be one of consumers, *Scientific American* knew that its audience would be industrial, technocratic individuals who read the magazine for professional gain in addition to personal enjoyment.[39]

On his first day at *Scientific American* as its new owner, Piel had opened a letter from Bell Laboratories canceling its advertising contract—the last contract for regular advertising the magazine held. When Piel told Bell of the new owners' plans, the company renewed its contract. That act symbolized the success of Piel's strategy, for industrial advertising grew quickly during the first few years. In August 1950 Piel reported to his shareholders that the magazine had carried a total of 133 pages of advertisements in its second year, and projected 250 pages in the third year. Bell Laboratories, he was proud to report, was one of the largest advertisers.[40]

Although the profit in magazine publishing came from advertisements, the logic of publishing required a good editorial product. Without it, readers would not buy the magazine. And without readers, advertisers would not place advertisements. With Piel out raising money and finding advertisers, Flanagan

"Mr. Piel, who feels a close kinship with *The New Yorker* ('our publishing economics are the same,' he said) also maintained that [*Scientific American*], because of its high-level content, attracts the 'cream' of the scientists, 'the people who make the basic decisions about manufacturing before anything is even bought.'"
– *Advertising Age*, 5 May 1958.

37. Gerard Piel to staff, 30 March 1948, and Piel to Pete Irwin, Donald H. Miller, Jr., C. L. Stong, and Jerome Feldman, 28 February 1949, both in *Scientific American* archives, circulation department files; *Advertising Age*, 5 May 1958, 8; and Piel, oral history, 1986.

38. Piel, oral history, 1986, 39; and Pete Irwin to Donald H. Miller, Jr., 22 August 1949, *Scientific American* archives, circulation department files.

39. *Tide*, 27 February 1948, 40; and "Gerard Piel of *Scientific American*," 60.

40. Flanagan, oral history, 51; Piel, oral history, 41–47; "A Case of Clicking"; Gerard Piel to "The Stockholders of The Sciences, Incorporated," 15 June 1949 (hereafter cited as Piel to Stockholders), Borras Papers, box 9, "Scientific American, Inc., 1949–1955" folder; Piel to shareholders and partners, draft, August 1950, *Scientific American* archives, circulation department files; and Piel to Warren Weaver, 12 November 1948, Rockefeller Foundation archives, RG1.1, ser. 200F, box 175, folder 2124.

concentrated on producing the magazine, aided by former *Time* science editor Leon Svirsky. Although early plans called for scientists to advise a large staff of writers, financial constraints forced the magazine to accept manuscripts from scientists, whose work editors would then rewrite into the appropriate style.[41] Flanagan insisted that "the three main divisions" of science—physical, biological, and social—be reported in each issue. In addition, the magazine regularly included articles on engineering and medicine, by intellectual design but also for economic reasons, because a substantial minority of its readers (about 40 percent) came from those fields.[42] Flanagan interpreted "science" widely, publishing stories on cybernetics, the H-bomb, the economic relations of science, the National Science Foundation, and the history of science (in addition to more traditional science topics such as particle physics, the biology of aging, and the relationship between temperature and life). The magazine was, in essence, a monument to the vision of science as savior of the world.[43]

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"The new *Scientific American* will find a unique place among U.S. magazines. It will serve as a universal medium for communication among men in the sciences, and between them and the public that is best equipped to understand their work and purpose."
– "An Announcement to Our Readers," April 1948.
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The focus on science dramatized Flanagan and Piel's social goals. "We believe," they had written in a prospectus, "that without such information [about science], modern man has only the haziest idea of how to act in behalf of his own happiness and welfare, or that of his own family and community." This belief indicated the ideology prevailing in Piel and Flanagan's vision of the magazine. Like so many others interested in popular science, they felt an almost missionary zeal to demonstrate the value of science for addressing the problems of the day.[44]

The magazine's focus on technical issues appealed to professional, technocratic readers. Within months after its launch the new *Scientific American* had become a fixture in the scientific community, reporting its achievements and reflecting its values.

41. Piel interview, 5 May 1986; "Introduction to *The Sciences*" [1947], 6; Flanagan, oral history, 11–12; "An Announcement to Our Readers," *Scientific American* 177 (December 1947): 244; "An Announcement to Our Readers (II)," *Scientific American* 177 (January 1948): 3; "An Announcement to Our Readers," *Scientific American* 177 (February 1948): 51; "An Announcement to Our Readers," *Scientific American* 177 (March 1948): 99; and "An Announcement to Our Readers," *Scientific American* 177 (April 1948): 147. For an introduction to the seemingly tautological logic of magazine publishing, see Peterson, *Magazines in the Twentieth Century*.

42. Solicitation brochure with Kroch's bookstore, spring 1950, *Scientific American* archives, circulation department files; Norma G. Behr to Mary Mulligan et al., 11 May 1953, *Scientific American* archives, circulation department files, box 1, book 1a; renewal letter, January 1958, *Scientific American* archives, circulation department files, box 1, book 4a; "Editorial Planning for the *Scientific American*," n.d., *Scientific American* archives, Dennis Flanagan files; Flanagan, oral history, 17, 37; and "Introduction to *The Sciences*" [1947], 6.

43. Piel's intellectual beliefs can be followed in his two collections of essays: *Science in the Cause of Man* (New York: Knopf, 1961) and *The Acceleration of History* (New York: Knopf, 1972). Flanagan's ideas appear in his recent book *Flanagan's Version* (New York: Knopf, 1988).

44. "*The Sciences*: A Prospectus in the Form of a Dialogue" [1947].

Piel and Flanagan had written in one prospectus that "we certainly have a point of view. It is that we are for science. With the men of science, we agree that human want is technologically obsolete." The scientific community eagerly supported them. One scientist called the new *Scientific American* "an extraordinarily good journal, too good to survive I almost fear.[45]

"Mr. Piel said he was on the right track when he received an angry letter from an old subscriber....'You have ruined the finest shop and hobby magazine in the world. Gone highbrow.'" – *Advertising Age*, 5 May 1958.

Despite all this optimism and success, the magazine's first two years did not go smoothly. The original $450,000 in capital had quickly disappeared in start-up costs. Another $300,000 also went quickly. Signs of success began to appear in 1949. By mid-year the renewal rates—the percentage of current subscribers who renewed their subscriptions—had gone above 50 percent and seemed to be climbing. Development of the editorial product and advertising sales were also going well.[46] But the partners determined that they still needed an additional $300,000 to reach profitable levels of circulation.[47] In the spring of 1949, one advisor suggested that Piel take his appeal to the American Association for the Advancement of Science. The association's initial reaction was favorable, though hesitant. One board member argued that, "it would be a severe loss for American science if *Scientific American* would not continue. It is the type of magazine which all of us have been wishing for and I think it is fulfilling a most important role in science education." But others worried that the project was too big for the AAAS.[48]

Throughout the negotiations, Piel reiterated his conviction that the magazine was essentially a means of supporting the scientific community. Joining the *Scientific American* to the AAAS, he said, "will increase the weight and influence of the [scientific community] in the public affairs of the nation." He was willing

45. "*The Sciences*: A Prospectus in the Form of a Dialogue" [1947]; "*Scientific American* Features," n.d., *Scientific American* archives, circulation department files, box 3, book 1b; Karl Lark-Horovitz to Howard Meyerhoff, 2 May 1949, Borras Papers, "Scientific American Inc., 1949–1955" folder; Karl K. Darrow to George W. Gray, 30 November 1948, George W. Gray Papers, Columbia University, New York, box 140, "Capitalization and Style" folder; and Warren Weaver, "The Program in the Natural Sciences," March 1950, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RG3.1, ser. 915, box 2, folder 14. For other indications of support from the scientific community, see Gray to Weaver, 20 June 1956, Gray Papers, box 140, "Science Writing" folder; and Weaver diary, 30 December 1949. Quote is from Lark-Horovitz to Meyerhoff, 2 May 1949.

46. "Renewal Rates, Direct to Publisher," 15 November 1949, *Scientific American* Archives, circulation department files.

47. "*Scientific American*" prospectus, May 1949, *Scientific American* archives, file cabinet 2; Piel to stockholders, 15 June 1949; Piel to Howard Meyerhoff, 2 May 1949, Borras Papers, box 9, "Scientific American Inc., 1949–1955" folder; and Weaver diary, 8 April 1949.

48. Paul E. Klopsteg to Howard Meyerhoff, 19 April 1949; Karl Lark-Horovitz to Meyerhoff, 2 May 1949; and Roger Adams to Meyerhoff, 23 May 1949, all in Borras Papers, box 9, "Scientific American Inc., 1949–1955" folder. I am grateful to Dr. Dael Wolfle, University of Washington, who served as executive secretary of the AAAS from 1953 to 1970 and shared with me drafts of his memoirs, *Renewing a Scientific Society* (Washington, D.C.: American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1989).

to give up ownership of the project in return for the opportunity to advance the status, position, and capabilities of the scientific community. His major concern, he said, was to fill "an important need for a magazine of the sciences." Even his investors, he claimed, "shared our editorial objectives and regarded the prospect of profit as a secondary consideration."[49]

In mid-June McGraw-Hill suddenly announced that it was folding *Science Illustrated*. The administrative secretary of the AAAS, Howard Meyerhoff, wrote to Piel that the "abrupt demise" of *Science Illustrated* "keenly interested" the AAAS executive committee. "To put my question in the vernacular, what's in it for you?"[50] In a long letter to Meyerhoff, Piel detailed his certainty that both "the immediate and long term prospects of SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN are positively and substantially enhanced by the failure of *Science Illustrated*." He attributed its business failure to "totally false" editorial premises, artificially inflated circulation, and failure to convince advertisers that it provided a valuable audience. Piel especially believed that the failure of *Science Illustrated* proved his contention that the audience for popular science was within the scientific community. *Science Illustrated*'s editorial content, he wrote,

> presenting science as a side show of gadgetry and wizardry—offended and lost at the outset the interest of the very people who can be expected to support a magazine of science; i.e., the [technical] people now numbered in the subscription list of SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN.[51]

On purely business grounds, Piel also expected to gain from the death of *Science Illustrated*, by gaining access to its subscribers and advertisers.[52]

Ultimately the AAAS rejected Piel's offer because it feared that the project was too big for the association to manage. Despite the disappointment, Piel and his colleagues found a silver lining. Buoyed by the respectability given to *Scientific American* by its negotiations with the AAAS, Piel managed to find new investors among the industrialists and financial leaders who had provided most of his earlier capital.[53]

Piel's disdain for *Science Illustrated*, expressed so forcefully to

Article titles from April 1948 issue of *Scientific American*:

- Phosphorous: Bearer of Light and Life
- What to Look for in FM
- Manufacturing Advances in Wartime Germany
- The Settlement of Canada's Northland
- Progress in the Heat Treatment of Steel

49. Piel to Meyerhoff, 2 May 1949. For some of the *Scientific American*'s investors, of course, the major issue was a tax write-off; see Piel, oral history, 31–32, 51–54; Weaver diary, 15 March 1949; and Weaver, "Understanding Science," 12 October 1948.

50. Howard Meyerhoff to Gerard Piel, 30 June 1949, Borras Papers, box 9, "Scientific American Inc., 1949–1955" folder.

51. Gerard Piel to Howard Meyerhoff, 1 July 1949, Borras Papers, box 9, "Scientific American Inc., 1949–1955" folder.

52. Piel to Meyerhoff, 1 July 1949, Borras Papers.

53. Howard Meyerhoff to Gerard Piel, 15 July 1949, Borras Papers, box 9, "Scientific American Inc., 1949–1955" folder; Moulton to Meyerhoff, 2 December 1949; Piel, oral history, 38; and Piel to stockholders, 15 June 1949. Finances did not immediately improve. At the end of 1949, Piel and Flanagan told Weaver that they were still on "pretty small rations," but they were confident

the AAAS, led him to underestimate the number of its readers who might become *Scientific American* subscribers. He expected to pick up only ten to twenty thousand new readers from the 500,000 names. In fact, he got more than fifty thousand. In January 1950 *Scientific American* announced that it would henceforth guarantee a circulation of 100,000—the magic number that allowed profitable operations and gave credibility and stability within the publishing and advertising communities. From then on Piel and his colleagues never looked back.[54]

Article titles from May 1948 issue of *Scientific American*:

The Future of the Amazon

The Man-Apes of South Africa

Vesalius

The Dust-Cloud Hypothesis

The Luminescence of Living Things

Davisson and Germer

THE IDEOLOGY OF SCIENCE AND THE LIMITS OF DEMAND

The story of *Science Illustrated* and *Scientific American* is an ironic one. McGraw-Hill, world-renowned as a publisher of narrowly focused, specialized publications, had failed in its attempt to publish a mass-circulation, general-interest magazine. But Piel and Flanagan, trained at *Life*, one of the world's most widely circulated magazines, had successfully created a magazine directed to a specialized audience.

In part, the story of the commercial publishers is a simple economic lesson. *Science Illustrated* made serious business mistakes, while *Scientific American* managed the entrepreneurial process better. The times were good ones for specialized magazines, and the success of *Scientific American* is just one case study in the history of a particular trend in media history.

But the commercial publishers' story is also revealing for what it says about larger cultural issues. The magazines' experience establishes the limits in the postwar years of the public "demand" for science. In the democratic, capitalist system, the demand for popular science was not sufficient to support an editorial product aimed at wide audiences. The new *Scientific American*, by adapting the rhetoric of popular science to a limited "public," had demonstrated the context in which the drive for public understanding of science could most easily survive. In so doing it showed how a magazine could survive by constructing an audience out of groups as yet unorganized in society. The technocratic elite to whom *Scientific American* appealed already existed, but had not yet found a common voice. The new *Scientific American* provided an occasion for the new technocratic elite to express itself, both on the editorial pages and through advertisements.

Thus the story of *Scientific American* and *Science Illustrated* is not simply one of media history. It also demonstrates the connections of the media to the intellectual and social trends of the society that the media serve. Science and technology were seen as important components of the postwar world; and we should

that the *Scientific American* would financially succeed. Weaver diary, 10 November 1949.

54. Piel to Meyerhoff, 1 July 1949; Piel, oral history, 40–42; Flanagan, oral history; Piel interview, 5 May 1986; and *Adweek*, February 1982, M.R. 74.

not be surprised that a new, carefully managed (in the business sense) magazine devoted to that topic survived. But it seems less coincidental that the successful magazine was also the one that confidently expressed the same commitment to science and technocratic control that drove much public policy in the post-war years. The magazine that survived was the one that expressed the ideology of the day, in terms with which an emerging technocratic elite could wholeheartedly agree.*

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* I would like to thank the many actors in the historical story who graciously gave me access to their papers, time, and recollections. Specific debts are indicated in the notes.

RECONSTRUCTION JOURNALISM: THE HAYS-HAWLEY LETTER

A Sensational Letter to the *Hartford Courant* Ignites a National Controversy

William Warren Rogers, Jr.

"AS FOR THE MALEDICTIONS WHICH the democratic leaders and party press deem proper to bestow upon me," Charles Hays informed his congressional colleagues, "I shall endure them in silence and peace, and trust to that spirit of justice which sooner or later must come to vindicate my record." Standing before the Congress on 26 February 1875, the representative from Alabama hoped to close a controversy involving himself and Joseph R. Hawley, the editor of the *Hartford Daily Courant*. The national press that Hays spoke of had recently seized on and magnified a public letter he had written to Hawley. The result, the Hays-Hawley letter, as it became known, attracted national attention.[1]

Charles Hays was born into an aristocratic Black Belt Alabama family in 1834. That region, deriving its name from the fertile soil and high concentration of slaves, stretched west from the capital of Montgomery through the central part of the state. Hays, a planter, was working over one hundred slaves on his extensive cotton plantation lands when the Civil War began. He opposed secession but, once the war began, served the Confederacy and was eventually promoted to the rank of major. Believing that extending civil and political rights to the freedmen was correct, Hays resisted Southern political orthodoxy and joined the Republican party after the war. In 1869 he was elected to the first of four terms from the heavily black Fourth Congressional District.[2]

1. *Cong. Rec.*, 43d Cong., 2d sess., Vol. 3, 1853.
2. William Warren Rogers, "'Politics is Mighty Uncertain': Charles Hays Goes to Congress," *Alabama Review* 30 (July 1977): 164–65; *Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774–1971* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1971), 1160. The Fourth Congressional District was composed of Autauga, Baker, Bibb, Choctaw, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Marengo, Perry, Pickens, Sanford, Shelby, Sumter, and Tuscaloosa counties. For Reconstruction in Alabama, see

William W. Rogers, Jr., is a visiting professor at the University of Alabama in the Department of History.

"I am anxious that the true condition of affairs in the State of Alabama should be known as soon as possible to the people of the whole country, in order that they may begin to realize the fact that the spirit of rebellion against the laws and Government of the United States, to extinguish which so many brave and gallant men laid down their lives, still exists in the hearts of many misguided people."
– Excerpts from Charles Hays's letter.

Joseph Hawley was also a member of Congress. Born in 1826 in North Carolina, Hawley had left the South as a young man. He eventually settled in Connecticut and began to make a national reputation as an editor. Hawley became editor of the *Hartford Evening Press* in 1857 (the paper merged with the *Hartford Courant* in 1867). Politics also attracted him. He joined the Free Soil party, then the Republican party, and was a self-described "radical abolitionist from my earliest days." Hawley became Brevet Brigadier General in the Union Army before the Civil War ended and served as governor of Connecticut in 1866–67. He began the first of three congressional terms in 1872.[3]

In Alabama and throughout the South, "Radical Reconstruction" had evoked passionate opposition. Taking issue with President Andrew Johnson, a majority of Congressional Republicans had by 1867 committed themselves to guaranteeing the freedmen basic citizenship rights. Northern Democrats, and certainly their Southern counterparts, strongly resisted granting equal status to the ex-slaves. Although various issues divided Republicans and Democrats during Reconstruction, the question of race was most fundamental. Reconstruction-related issues dominated editorial comment and the printed accounts of the national newspaper press. Objectivity quickly yielded to partisan considerations among journalists.

The circumstances of the 1874 mid-term elections made for the collaboration between Hays and Hawley. As became apparent, violence would characterize the contest in the Reconstruction South. Political violence during Reconstruction was common. Members of the Ku Klux Klan and various nightriding orders had shot, beaten, and hanged Republicans in the name of white supremacy since Congressional or "Radical" Reconstruction got underway in 1867–68. The Klan had died out, but a small minority of whites formed political societies (the most common being the White League) in 1874 and revived the terrorism. Against this backdrop, the Hays-Hawley letter was set.[4]

Congressman Hays's bailiwick, the Fourth District, offered a grim microcosm of the degenerating conditions. In August 1874 in Sumter County, two leading Republicans were shot and killed. The assassinations of Walter P. Billings, a white, and Thomas L. Ivey, a black, were obviously politically related. Both

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The Scalawag in Alabama Politics, 1865–1881 (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1977).

3. *Cong. Rec.*, 43d Cong., 2d sess., Vol. 3, 1853; *Biographical Directory of the American Congress*, 1890–91; John Bard McNulty, *Older Than the Nation: The Story of the Hartford Courant* (Storington, Conn.: Pequot Press, 1964), 88.

4. William Gillette, *Retreat from Reconstruction, 1869–1879* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 225–30; George C. Rable, *But There Was No Peace: The Role of Violence in the Politics of Reconstruction* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984), 114–18, 131–32. For a general overview of Reconstruction, see Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution 1863–1877* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988).

men had previously been warned about their outspoken efforts to build up the Republican party. Republicans also faced persecution elsewhere in the state. Alarmed by the escalating trouble, Hays and several state Republicans travelled to Washington in early September and met with President Ulysses S. Grant. The Republican president became convinced that the situation was critical and authorized the use of troops for election day.[5]

While in Washington Hays also talked with Joseph Hawley. The editor-congressman overheard Hays privately discussing the political violence directed at Alabama Republicans. He listened to Hays's rendition with empathy and indignation. Maintaining that such conditions begged to be exposed and rectified, Hawley asked the Alabamian to put his comments in writing and permit their publication in the *Hartford Courant.* Hays consented without hesitation. Hawley followed up the next day, 7 September, with a formal written request. Referring to the previous evening and what he described as Hays's "informal narration of late occurences," Hawley asked the congressman for "the substance of what you have told me."[6]

Hays began his task at once. Drawing upon newspapers, telegraphic dispatches, correspondence, and his general knowledge, the congressman constructed a grisly scenario. Although he could have recited a backlog of crimes, Hays confined his observations to the recent past and generally to the Fourth District. Hawley read and approved the narrative, and after forwarding the lengthy letter to the *Courant,* went hunting.

"The bare recital of proven facts shall be my only appeal. That will cause the heart to shudder, the cheek to blanch, and the mind to wonder how such dastardly outrages, such unprovoked murders, and such fiend-like conduct can be tolerated for an hour."
– Hays's letter.

The shocking expose was spread across the front page of the *Courant* on 15 September. A devastating picture of Fourth District conditions began with a survey of Sumter County. The congressman summarized the shootings of Walter Billings and Thomas Ivey. In Hays's estimation, vigilantees killed Billings because he was a "Yankee" and a "republican." He referred readers to Billing's widow for further details of the "revolting murder." Ivey was likewise executed for being a "meddlesome" Republican. Without imparting any blame (but the implication was clear), Hays also mentioned the recent murders of five Sumter County freedmen in one night. He attributed the carnage in Sumter generally to "a murderous band of Democrats." Affairs were not dramatically improved in Hale County, a heavily black-populated Fourth District county. Two pistol-carrying whites had recently warned a visiting Republican speaker there not to return. In Perry County, also a party stronghold, a prominent Republican had been mobbed. Republicans in Choctaw and Marengo, two other counties that he

5. House Select Committee, *Affairs in Alabama,* 43d Cong., 2d sess., H. Rpt. 262, George Williams, 1218, 1225 (hereafter cited as *Affairs in Alabama*); William Warren Rogers and Ruth Pruitt, *Stephen S. Renfroe, Alabama's Outlaw Sheriff* (Tallahassee, Fla.: Sentry Press, 1972), 45–51.
6. *Hartford Courant,* 15 September 1874.

represented, lived constantly with danger. Acting on a rumor that freedmen were preparing to wage race war, Choctaw whites had killed ten and wounded thirteen blacks. In Marengo County, William Lipscomb, a white man, was found shot to death in the road. Hays let his Northern readers draw their own conclusions concerning the death of the "earnest Republican."

Unrest prevailed throughout the Fourth District, but mistreatment of Republicans was worse in Pickens County. "This is a county in West Alabama," Hays wrote frankly, "where the white men publicly boast that no white man ever cast a republican vote and lived through the year." Hays described Pickens as a bastion of white supremacy where a group of whites had lynched four blacks in mid-August. That same week a raft bearing the decomposing bodies of two freedmen and one white man was discovered floating down the nearby Tombigbee River. The Caucasian was a German and obviously a Republican. Attached to the corpse was a sign with the inscription, "This is the way we treat Dutch niggers." Around the necks of the black men were placards reading, "To Mobile with the compliments of Pickens County." The letter, carrying over from the *Courant*'s front page (and including accounts that Hays lifted verbatim from newspapers) was about five thousand words in length. Hays's charges would be widely read. The *Courant*, one of the oldest newspapers in the country, claimed the second largest circulation in New England.[7]

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"When discovered [Capt. Billings] and his horse were both lying dead in the public road, his body pierced with buckshot, and that of his horse riddled with bullets."
– Hays's letter.
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Accounts of Democrat-inspired "outrages" were standard fare in large daily Republican newspapers, especially in the North and Midwest. The picture that emerged of the South was of a dark, unreconstructed landscape full of hate and intolerance. As party spokesman, Democratic editors argued that Republicans manufactured the reports for self-serving reasons. They claimed that opposition editors used fictitious charges of unrest to justify continued federal interference. Democratic journalists either denied the crimes, disputed their political nature, or maintained that Republicans had actually instigated the violence. Little could be established definitively. As the *Boston Globe* rationalized, "there is undoubtedly considerable difficulty in deciding how much to believe or disbelieve in regard to the conditions of things in the South."[8]

The imprimatur of a congressman lent a legitimacy that other so-called "outrage" accounts from the South lacked. Given Hays's background, Hawley felt that readers would believe the

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7. *Hurtford Courant*, 15 September 1874; McNulty, *Older Than The Nation*, 90.
8. *Boston Daily Globe*, 13 October 1874. A study of the newspaper press during Reconstruction is long overdue. For some mention see Rable, *But There Was No Peace*, 77, 87, 119; and Richard H. Abbot, *The Republican Party and the South, 1855–1877: The First Southern Strategy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 92–3.

charges. The *Courant*'s editor described Hays to readers as one of Alabama's largest slaveholders before the war and an ex-Confederate, and concluded that his remarks were "testimony from the highest source."[9]

Neither Hays nor Hawley could have predicted the uproarious reaction. The "Hays-Hawley letter" created a furor among America's highly partisan newspapers, drawing comment from major dailies in every section of the nation. If not "copied through the country,"[10] as the *Indianapolis Sentinel* insisted, or "read from a hundred stumps, like the Declaration of Independence,"[11] as a *Cincinnati Commercial* journalist remarked, the letter was spread far from the climes of Hawley's Connecticut. Commenting that "the entire nation stood aghast," the *New York Tribune* reasoned that "one of the vexed questions of the day" concerns "whether Alabama is really under a rule of terror."[12]

"When the friends of Ivey took charge of his body twenty odd bullet holes were found in it; his jaws were cut open and his tongue pulled out by its roots." – Hays's letter.

The Democratic press questioned Hays's motives, veracity, and character. The judgment of the *New York Sun* was extremely negative. Its editor, the noted Charles A. Dana, presided over the nominally Democratic paper. Perhaps Hays knew about "the long and short staple of his cotton bolls," the *Sun* allowed, but, "there his faculty, if he has any, begins and ends." The paper charged (truthfully enough) that Hays cut a slight figure in the House. If a "sudden providence" vacated his seat, no one would realize his absence but his landlady and the sergeant at arms.[13] In St. Louis the *Post-Dispatch* wondered why a paper should bother to publish the correspondence of a Southern Republican "at war with his people, his race, and his color."[14] Farther West, in keeping with the spirit of partisan journalism, the *San Francisco Examiner* condemned the "startling letter" as political hyperbole.[15]

The Hays-Hawley letter attracted an equally hostile reception in the Democratic Southern press, including the *Atlanta Constitution, Nashville Union and American, Richmond Dispatch,* and *Charleston News and Courier.* Typical was the estimation of the *Louisville Courier-Journal.* Reacting to the latest outrage account, the *Courier-Journal* lamented that accounts like Hays's were "seized upon, exaggerated, tortured, twisted and garbled by Radical leaders and newspapers into evidence of an existing

9. *Hartford Courant,* 15 September 1874.
10. *Indianapolis Sentinel* quoted in *Mobile Daily Register,* 9 October 1874.
11. *Cincinnati Commercial,* 1 October 1874.
12. *New York Tribune,* 7 and 12 October 1874. For comment see *St. Louis Post-Dispatch,* 22 September 1874; *Nashville Union and American,* 1 October 1874; *Charleston News and Courier,* 23 October 1874; *Memphis Daily Avalanche,* 1 October 1874; and *New York Times,* 24 October 1874.
13. *New York Sun,* 28 September 1874. On Charles Dana see Frank M. O'Brien, *The Story of the Sun* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1908), 148–50, 187, 189.
14. *St. Louis Post-Dispatch,* 22 September 1874.
15. *San Francisco Examiner,* 12 October 1874.

rebellion." By publicizing Hays's narrative, the *Courier-Journal* felt, Republican editors were merely perpetuating the myth of Southern defiance.[16]

Only a few Southern Republican newspapers existed, but several Northern party editors rushed to Hays's defense. The *Cincinnati Gazette* published the letter in its entirety. Noting the Alabama situation, the *Gazette* recommended Hays's comments to the "reader who desires accurate information respecting the condition of affairs in the South."[17] The *Washington New National Era* featured the letter on its first page and decried the "frightful outrages and midnight murders" of "the rebels of Alabama."[18] Accepting the congressman's allegations at face value, the *Boston Globe* made the point that a Democratic press could not refute the testimony of a Southerner who had owned slaves and fought for the Confederacy.

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"The four men... charged with the killing of Simon Edwards, were discharged from custody on Thursday evening.... These four men ...are said to be among our most respectable citizens, and it is to be regretted that honest white men should be put to so much trouble and expense upon the affidavit of an ignorant negro."
– Hays's citation of story from the *Meridian Star* (Democratic).
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The editor of the *New York Tribune* took a special interest in the controversy. Whitelaw Reid had recently assumed control of the influential daily. After standing in temporarily while Horace Greeley ran for president in 1872, Reid had assumed control of the *Tribune* following Greeley's death shortly after the election. Reid considered himself a Republican, although he objected to the Grant administration. He particularly opposed the continued interference of the federal government in the South. Having made a much publicized Southern tour in 1865–66, Reid continued to be interested in the former Confederacy. In early October the paper announced that it had sent a reporter to Alabama to investigate Hays's allegations.

Zebulon L. White, the *Tribune*'s chief Washington correspondent, had headed south in late September. Instructed to visit and report from centers of Republican-Democratic strife, he was attracted to Alabama by Hays's revelations. The journalist carried a copy of the Hays-Hawley letter with him. In Montgomery, the capital, and a city of some thirteen thousand citizens, White passed the first week of October there interviewing prominent Democrats and a few Republicans. Despite contradicting accounts, he chose to accept the Democratic version of events. A systematic refutation of Hays's position, under the bold caption, "The Slandered State," appeared on the front page of the *Tribune*'s 12 October issue. White also revealed his plans to visit the scene of the "most excitement"— Sumter County.[19]

At Livingston, the county seat, the correspondent made inquiries for several days. As in Montgomery, White gave credence to the Democratic position. He generally discounted the

16. *Louisville Courier-Journal*, 8 October 1874; *Atlanta Constitution*, 17 October 1874; *Nashville Union and American*, 16 October 1874; *Richmond Dispatch*, 14 October 1874; *Charleston News and Courier*, 23 October 1874.
17. *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, 18 September 1874.
18. *Washington New National Era*, 27 August, 24 September, and 8 October 1874.
19. "Affairs in Alabama," Zebulon White, 1080–91; *Boston Globe*, 16 September

violence Hays had described. Admitting that Walter Billings and Thomas Ivey might have been killed because they were outspoken Republicans, White nevertheless insisted, in a series of stories printed in the *Tribune*, that most Sumter County whites condemned the murders. Peace prevailed, White claimed. The newspaperman exonerated almost everyone except Hays, whom he charged with blatantly misrepresenting events in Sumter County. Having made his case, White dropped plans to visit the other counties Hays had featured.[20]

"WARNING! (A picture of a coffin.) The invisible monarch rules in Sumter, and watches the doings of his people from a little star above you. All 'niggers,' white and black, will take warning from the fate of Billings and Ivey. They were killed by unknown hands, which will never be known. Those hands will destroy again."

– Hays's transcription of a Sumter County poster.

As the protracted story received national attention, Hawley himself was inevitably criticized. Called on to repudiate Hays, the *Courant*'s editor refused. Even so, the paper printed statements from Fourth District citizens that contradicted the congressman. Deftly using semantics, the *Courant* reasoned that Hays was "misinformed" or "in one or two instances conveyed the wrong impression."[21] No retraction of his basic assertion was made. Hawley wrote Charles Dana at the *Sun* a week after the letter appeared. He defended Hays and asked why the *Sun* had criticized the congressman without printing his letter or the *Courant*'s description of him. Hawley hoped that a fellow editor could appreciate that he "wanted the readers of the *Courant* to hear one report from somebody on whom they could put their fingers."[22] A commitment to informing the public, the most basic journalistic prerequisite, compelled Hawley to offer Hays a forum. An understanding of the power of the printed word caused the angry congressman to accept the invitation.

Hawley soon received a note from Stephen A. Hubbard, the *Courant*'s managing editor. Hubbard mentioned the possibility of some errors in the congressman's presentation and added, "If Hays has overstated anything, I am sorry; there has evidently been enough persecution there to establish a good case without alluding to acts of violence not well authenticated." Hubbard also informed Hawley that many Alabama newspapers were "pitching in . . . quite severely" on the letter.[23]

Alabama's overwhelmingly Democratic press had attacked Hays without mercy. Refuting the allegations became a ritual among party editors. As unofficial spokesman for the state Democratic party, the *Montgomery Advertiser* had begun the

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1874; *New York Tribune*, 12 October 1874. On Whitelaw Reid, see Harry W. Baehr, Jr., *The New York Tribune Since the Civil War* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1936), 109, 112–22, 132, 146–49; and Reid's own *After the War: A Tour of Southern States 1865–1866* (Cincinnati: Moore, Wilstach & Baldwin, 1866).

20. *New York Tribune*, 15 and 17 October 1874; Affairs in Alabama," Zebulon White, 1082–91.

21. *Hartford Courant* quoted in *Livingston* (Alabama) *Journal*, 9 October 1874; *Indianapolis Sentinel* quoted in *Montgomery Advertiser*, 6 October 1874; *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 22 September 1874.

22. Joseph Hawley to Charles Dana, 20 September 1874, Joseph R. Hawley Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

23. Stephen Hubbard to Joseph Hawley, 29 September 1874, Hawley Papers.

process in a lengthy rebuttal soon after the letter appeared. The *Advertiser* concluded that Hays "had mistaken the Northern public for a herd of blinking-idiots."[24] Fourth District editors subjected Hays to unequivocal and relentless condemnation. Epithets were employed, evidence to the contrary amassed, affidavits sworn to, and one presumed victim even resurrected from the grave. The case of William Lipscomb became a favorite source of comment for Hays's critics. Hays had erroneously charged that this "earnest Republican" had been shot to death in Marengo County. Lipscomb authored a widely published disclaimer; he was introduced to at least one audience; and the editor of the *Marengo New Journal* facetiously marveled at his return "from the land of the ghosts."[25]

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"Born, educated, and living all my life in the South, I thought I knew the feelings, and the passions of our people....I believed that they would forget the animosities and antipathies engendered by the war, and go faithfully to work to build up the shattered pillars of that Union which they had so fruitlessly endeavored to destroy."
– Hays's letter.
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Hays described Pickens County in the worst light to the nation. His was a dark picture: blacks remained virtual slaves, few voted, and any Republican who dared speak "would be shot down like a mad dog." In the county seat of Carrollton, editors of the *West Alabamian* composed a reply. The paper categorically denied that Republicans (black or white) were mistreated and challenged the congressman for specifics. The *West Alabamian* mocked Hays by running his lurid description of Pickens on its editorial masthead through election day.[26]

The debate was one-sided. By 1874 most Republican state newspapers, never on a solid financial basis, had been discontinued. One exception was the *Montgomery Alabama State Journal.* Yet even that normally outspoken paper remained strangely silent throughout the controversy.

Despite the extreme criticism, Joseph Hawley remained convinced that he had acted correctly. As a Republican, Hawley felt that conditions in Alabama should be made public. The morally upright former abolitionist did not doubt the truthfulness of the accusations. As an editor he recognized the opportunity to score a journalistic coup. At the height of the furor he defended Hays as an "honest man" to Charles Dana. He was not convinced otherwise by the Richard Harding Davis style of reporting of Zebulon White at the *Tribune.* Hawley assured Dana that Hays possessed integrity, mentioning his honorable war record and the high regard black constituents held for the congressman.

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24. *Montgomery Advertiser,* 22 September 1874. For accounts of the extreme opposition to Congressional Reconstruction see Allen W. Trelease, *White Terror: The Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy and Southern Reconstruction* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), xi–xlviii; Foner, *Reconstruction,* 412–59. A study of journalism in the Fourth Congressional District during Reconstruction is Nancy Ann Sindon, "The Career of Ryland Randolph, A Study in Reconstruction Journalism," (M.A. thesis, Florida State University, 1965).

25. *Marengo News Journal,* 26 September 1874; for comment see *Greensboro Alabama Beacon,* 26 September and 3 October 1874; *Marion Commonwealth,* 24 September 1874.

26. *Carrollton West Alabamian,* 30 September 1874.

Hawley understood the world of slanted/sensationalized journalism. Partisan Reconstruction journalists might profess objectivity but they rarely practiced it.[27]

Democratic criticism had no measurable impact on the election in the Fourth District. The freedmen provided Hays a comfortable margin of victory. But the controversy did not end. Admitting before Congress after the election that "as to some minor facts I was misled," Hays insisted on the general validity of his case. He had reason to do so. The widespread violence that characterized the mid-term 1874 elections in the South was played out with brutal finality in Alabama's Fourth Congressional District. Nowhere were conditions worse than in Sumter County. Despite *Tribune* reporter White's findings, martial law could have been declared with justification during the months prior to the election. Both Walter Billings and Thomas Ivey were killed because of their close Republican associations. John Stokes, the Republican warned against speaking again in Hale County, revealed that his midnight visitors threatened to "swing [him] to a limb" and kill Hays "damn quick." Also, as Hays insisted, a lynch mob of Pickens County citizens had hanged four freedmen.[29]

Despite his steadfastness, Hays can also be faulted. The letter was framed in haste. Hawley's request and the congressman's reply were dated the same day. Hays had promised "to narrate no rumors, to color no atrocity . . . but simply to give you well authenticated facts." Yet, without sufficient corroboration, Hays gave credence to some events that never took place and presented others out of context.[30]

What was certain was that the national press had briefly lifted the obscure congressman from the Alabama outback to prominence. Soon after Hays returned to his anonymous congressional role, and in 1877 he retired from politics. By then, with the election of Rutherford B. Hayes as president in 1876 and the removal of the last troops from the South, Reconstruction was over. Hawley continued to be chief proprietor and edit the *Courant* until 1881. Leaving the journalism trade in that year (he had never actually written many editorials), Hawley began a long tenure in the Senate.[31]

The Hays-Hawley letter had attracted the attention of the

"The agents of the Southern Associated Press alone furnish news to your papers....Our views, speeches, platforms, writings, and actions generally are garbled and missent to deceive the people of the North, and convince them that the South is being plundered by adventurers; that corruption and infamy stalk forth with monstrous iniquity in all our public places, and that every man who dares to raise his voice for the principles of Republicanism is a felon, and unworthy to walk the earth on which he lives."
– Hays's letter.

27. Joseph Hawley to Charles Dana, 20 September 1874, Hawley Papers.
28. *Cong. Rec.*, 43d Cong., 2d sess., Vol. 3, 1851.
29. *Affairs in Alabama*, John Stokes, 1069–70; *Carrollton West Alabamian*, 30 September 1874; William Warren Rogers and Robert David Ward, *Jack Turner and Racism in Post-Civil War Alabama* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973), 24–45.
30. *Hartford Courant*, 15 September 1874; *Montgomery Advertiser*, 22 September 1874; *Marengo News Journal*, 16 September 1874; *Greensboro Alabama Beacon*, 26 September and 3 October 1874.
31. McNulty, *Older Than the Nation*, 97; *Biographical Directory of the American Congress*, 1890–91.

national press for entirely different reasons. Once the story broke, both Democrats and Republicans attempted to gain political capital. It was unusual that opposing party editors pointed to and quoted from the same source for vindication. Republican editors offered Hays's testimony as incontrovertible proof of Southern recalcitrance. Hays's narrative—graphic and brutal—confirmed the widespread hostility to Republicanism in the South. Democratic journalists argued that the congressman had exaggerated and lied. The Hays-Hawley letter clearly illustrated how Republicans misrepresented the Southern situation. The "outrage mill," a term pejoratively used to describe printed Republican accounts of Democratic violence, had never been in better working order.

"When I remember that all through the sombre scenes of war, in the midst of adversity and tribulation, [my slaves] stood faithful to me and mine, it makes my very heart bleed to see them writhe and suffer in the enjoyment (!) of that boon which was intended to bring happiness and comfort. I am powerless to help them, but as long as life lasts let me appeal to my Northern friends to stand by and protect these able sons of the South, who have never sung a song unless it was one dedicated to 'liberty and to Union.'"
– Hays's letter.

In a larger context, the war of words pointed to the continued central role of American newspapers and editors in national politics. A tradition of proselytizing and involvement dated at least from the establishment of the *Philadelphia National Gazette* by Phillip Freneau in 1791. The age of Andrew Jackson and the attending party battles provided another watershed for the partisan press. The unprecedented volatility of Reconstruction allowed less objectivity than ever. Unstated but obvious bias was standard editorial policy among both Democrats and Republicans. Slanting straight news stories was common. Viewed in this light, the episode was symptomatic of Reconstruction journalism. As with other negative descriptions of the South, on one side Republican editors did not hesitate to print as fact Hays's charges. On the other side Democrats blindly refused to admit any validity to the situation Hays described. The Hays-Hawley letter's publication, dissemination, and national reception offered a classic example of partisan journalism during an era of extreme political bitterness.

Historiographical Essay

THE REVOLUTIONARY PRESS: SOURCE OF UNITY OR DIVISION?

Press Historians Rewrite the Story of the American Revolution

Carol Sue Humphrey

AMERICANS HAVE ALWAYS CONSIDERED their war for independence a central event in the history of the United States. It not only produced a new nation but also played an important role in the development of a unified American populace. Historians have long given much consideration to the factors which produced the American Revolution, and they have always given ample credit for the success of the revolt to the press for its efforts during the conflict. One of the earliest historians of the American Revolution, David Ramsay, affirmed that "in establishing American independence, the pen and the press had a merit equal to that of the sword."[1] Yet, although historians have agreed on the importance of the press in the move toward independence, they have disagreed on the type of role that American printers played in the war with Great Britain. Over the years, studies have credited the eighteenth-century journalists with everything from providing part of the building blocks for American democracy to establishing the beginnings of professional journalism in the United States; from fueling a class conflict between those in and out of power to serving as a reflector of the growing unity that existed in America long before the first shots at Lexington and Concord.

The debate persists even today, as historians continue to disagree about the role the press played in the revolt from Great Britain. In 1980 the American Antiquarian Society published *The Press and the American Revolution,* a collection of essays that reflects the continuing disagreements over the role of the press in the American Revolution. All of the essays in this work emphasize the growth and development of the press during the Revolution, but they do so from several perspectives.

Several essays adopted the Progressive interpretation, stress-

1. David Ramsay, *The History of the American Revolution* (Philadelphia, 1789), 2:319.

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"The observations on personalities and politics that were normally eschewed in the London press were entirely beyond the control of government in America, and the 'London letters' consequently form a freer and more explicit commentary on events in London than the reporting in the English press."
– Paul Langford, "British Correspondence."

ing the conflicts the war produced. Janice Potter and Robert M. Calhoon found that some loyalist printers thought that "the most substantive threat to their freedom emanated not from Britain but from the patriot congresses, committees, and mobs in their midst." Paul Langford's study of British correspondence in the colonial press concluded that reports in the colonial press concerning British attitudes toward America only served to worsen misunderstandings and divisions between the colonies and the mother country. Both Robert M. Weir and Stephen Botein questioned the motives of the printers in supporting the patriot cause. Weir, in studying the Southern newspaper press, found the printers to be "the voice of the local political establishment" who could not afford to antagonize their major supporters. Botein stressed that printers began to adopt a more partisan stance when it became clear that their traditional neutral position was no longer economically feasible.[2]

All of these essays emphasized the divisiveness and change-producing aspects of the Revolution, but other essays in the collection reflected the Consensus view that the press served to reflect the basic unity that existed in the colonies at the time of the Revolution. Willi Paul Adams, in studying the German-language press, found that it carried a primarily political function instead of the religious emphasis as had been previously thought by historians. According to Adams,

> The German-language press, like its English-language counterpart, made possible rational discussion on questions of statecraft and social betterment beyond the limited circles of the elite, among a population too spread out and too large to assemble in one's city marketplace. Further, it helped create a "new forum" of public opinion essential for the growth of a shared sense of legitimacy. Finally, like the English-language press, the German-language press was an integrating force, essential to the process of nation-building.[3]

The German-language press "helped the German-speaking minority to feel part of and to function in a larger national whole." The press played a unifying role that helped the revolution succeed.

The American Antiquarian Society publication is not the first

2. Stephen Botein, "Printers and the American Revolution," in *The Press and the American Revolution*, ed. Bernard Bailyn and John B. Hench (Worcester, Mass.: American Antiquarian Society, 1980), 11–58; Robert M. Weir, "The Role of the Newspaper Press in the Southern Colonies on the Eve of the Revolution: An Interpretation," in Bailyn and Hench, 99–150; Paul Langford, "British Correspondence in the Colonial Press, 1763–1775: A Study in Anglo-American Misunderstanding Before the American Revolution," in Bailyn and Hench, 273–314; and Janice Potter and Robert M. Calhoon, "The Character and Coherence of the Loyalist Press," in Bailyn and Hench, 229–272.

3. Willi Paul Adams, "The Colonial German-Language Press and the American Revolution," in Bailyn and Hench, 151–228.

in which scholars have disagreed about the American Revolutionary press. Historians have argued about the role of newspapers in the American Revolution ever since the war began in 1775. Much ink and paper have been spent in this effort, but no resolution has been reached in the debate. The importance of the press in the Revolution is assured, but the role it played is far from clear.

Scholars of the Revolutionary press have not usually classified themselves as part of a particular group; but because of how they perceive American history, they tend to fall into several groups that have changed over the years. In general, there are five different views of the role of the media during the Revolutionary War. The Nationalist/Romantic schools dominated prior to the Civil War. The Developmental school, which came to prominence after the Civil War, has proved the most pervasive and continues to be the most dominant interpretation. The Progressive school appeared in the early twentieth century, but has remained influential since that time. The Consensus and Cultural schools appeared following the Second World War. Obviously, these groups overlap, but each has certain characteristics that differentiate it from the others.

"If it is true that the political language and thought of pre-Revolutionary America were often curiously unrevealing, highly sensitive perhaps to the shared concerns of local elites but not to the issues that made for divisions among both powerful and common people, the trade strategies of printers may have been partially responsible."
– Stephen Botein, "Printers and the American Revolution."

THE NATIONALIST/ROMANTIC SCHOOLS

During the first half of the nineteenth century, historians emphasized the patriotism of printers in their efforts to help America establish its republican system as a model for the world. The American colonies had an important role to play in making the world a better place to live through the spread of democracy and freedom, and the press had served well in helping to bring about the break with the mother country.

Much of the history written by these historians discussed the "great men" of revolutionary journalism. The emphasis was on the importance of individuals in creating an American press that kept the people informed on the issues involved in the conflict with Britain. The historians of this school knew most of the people they wrote about, and some had experienced the Revolution personally. They believed strongly in the role of the printers in producing the Revolution.

The stress on "great men" is most clearly seen in the work of Isaiah Thomas and Joseph Buckingham, who tried to preserve the records of journalistic efforts during the American Revolution. Both of these historians placed particular importance in their efforts on the *Boston Gazette* and its publishers, especially Benjamin Edes. Thomas was himself a printer of note during the Revolution, but in his *The History of Printing in America*, he credited Edes and the *Gazette* as being "instrumental" in the move toward independence.[4] Thomas's book was the first major

4. Isaiah Thomas, *The History of Printing in America* (Worcester, Mass.: Isaiah Thomas, Jr., 1810; reprint, Barre, Mass.: Imprint Society, 1970), 1:139.

history of American journalism and still offers useful insights to modern historians of the era. It is essential reading for anyone studying the role of newspapers during the Revolutionary era.

Buckingham also credited Edes and his supporters with an important role in America's fight for independence. His *Specimens of Newspaper Literature* praised the *Gazette*'s writers as a patriotic group that produced many pieces that urged the colonials to stand up to the British. "One united spirit of hostility pervaded their minds, and each seemed strengthened and invigorated by contact with another."[5]

As a group the Nationalist/Romantic historians perceived only good in the efforts of the Revolutionary press. They continually emphasized the importance of the newspapers in bringing on the revolt and praised the printers for their loyalty and patriotism.

THE DEVELOPMENTAL SCHOOL

Following the Civil War, the first generation of professionally trained historians began to produce studies of American history. These writers, influenced by an increasing emphasis on the validity of science and its techniques, underscored the organic development of the United States and its institutions. Most historians of American journalism continued to be working journalists (as Thomas and Buckingham had been), but they were influenced by the changes in the newspaper field. They increasingly stressed the professional development of the press, underscoring the origin of the press and its progress toward "proper" practices, such as an emphasis on news and timeliness. Most of these authors emphasized journalistic "firsts" and, as a result, often dealt with individual newspapers and publishers rather than the industry as a whole. This interpretation became the most popular among historians of the press and has remained strong for over a hundred years.

"The early part of the history of the United States, is not, like that of most other nations, blended with fable. Many of the first European settlers of this country were men of letters; they made records of events as they passed, and they, from the first, adopted effectual methods to transmit the knowledge of them to their posterity."
– Isaiah Thomas, *History of Printing.*

Prominent among the advocates of this interpretation were several authors who produced important surveys of the history of American journalism. This group included such historians as Frederic Hudson, James Melvin Lee, Willard Grosvenor Bleyer, and Robert W. Jones. All of them emphasized the impact of the Revolutionary war in the development of the American press from a trade into a profession and the influential role the press played in the Revolution itself. According to Bleyer, the colonial weeklies "played their part in developing a feeling of solidarity among the colonists in the struggle against the mother country" and "the protracted struggle between the colonies and the mother country from 1765 to 1783 demonstrated the value of the press as a means of influencing public opinion." Jones concluded that "the position of the newspaper publisher was now

5. Joseph T. Buckingham, *Specimens of Newspaper Literature* (Boston: C. C. Little and J. Brown, 1850), 1:192.

one of greater importance because of the prestige resulting from the success of the Revolutionary War." All of these authors emphasized specific papers and people and the changes that occurred during the Revolution.[6]

"From [the Stamp Act] forward, the press was recognized as a strong arm of the Patriot movement. Of the three great media of propaganda in the Revolution--the omnipresent pamphlet, the sermons of the political clergy, and the newspaper--it was the last which made the greatest gain."
– Frank L. Mott, *American Journalism.*

Probably the most important author in the Developmental school was Frank Luther Mott, the author of one of the dominant survey histories of American journalism written during the twentieth century. In many ways, Mott's efforts constituted the height of the dominance of the Developmental school. In his studies of the American Revolution, he emphasized the growing influence of the press because the colonial newspapers provided increasing coverage of American political affairs as the conflict with Great Britain became more intense. Particularly important in this development were the efforts of the press during the Stamp Act crisis. Because of the victory in 1765, colonial leaders "respected this new power." Mott concluded that "by the end of the war journalism had made a distinct gain in prestige." He also stressed the importance of how news was acquired during the Revolution. In an important article in 1944, he traced the spread of the news of the battles at Lexington and Concord through the pages of the colonial newspapers. Mott's work emphasized the growing importance of the media as the colonials successfully broke away from the mother country.[7]

Many other historians have adopted the Developmental interpretation of the role of the press in the American Revolution. The result has been a plethora of studies by authors such as Albert Carlos Bates and Rollo G. Silver that emphasize the growth of American journalism primarily through the recital of the careers of individual people and the records of individual papers. C.M. Thomas studied the press of the Revolutionary era through reviewing the careers of three New York printers: John Holt, James Rivington, and Hugh Gaine. He concluded that most American printers in the 1760s and 1770s were good at their jobs, but only those who supported the patriot cause have been remembered. Capable printers such as Rivington and Gaine "chose the side that lost and were lost with it" even though they too played an important part in the growth of the American press in the eighteenth century.[8]

6. Frederic Hudson, *Journalism in the United States, from 1690 to 1872* (New York: Harper, 1873), 102; James Melvin Lee, *History of American Journalism* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1923), 82–99; Willard Grosvenor Bleyer, *Main Currents in the History of American Journalism* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1927), 76–99; and Robert W. Jones, *Journalism in the United States* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1947), 119–48.

7. Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism: A History, 1690–1960*, 3d ed. (New York: MacMillan, 1962), 107; and "The Newspaper Coverage of Lexington and Concord," *New England Quarterly* 16 (December 1944): 489–505.

8. Albert Carlos Bates, "Fighting the Revolution with Printer's Ink in Connecticut: The Official Printing of that Colony From Lexington to the Declaration," *Papers of the New Haven Colony Historical Society* 9 (1918): 129–60; Rollo G. Silver, "Government Printing in Massachusetts, 1751–1801," *Studies in Bibliography* 16

The Developmental outlook has also produced studies of specific roles which the press generally plays, particularly of the development of the editorial function. Jim A. Hart emphasized the growing use of opinion in the press during the American Revolution. Opinions normally appeared in the form of letters and essays from contributors, but Hart concluded that "the first strains of the editorial...appeared occasionally." In a similar vein, John M. Harrison concluded that revolutionary newspaper contributors constituted "the first editorial writers in the American press, establishing one of the primary functions of newspapers as they were to develop in the United States."[9]

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"We Americans have a lot of romantic notions about many of our institutions--none being encrusted with a heavier romantic overlay than the press. Thus we have lionized such early printers and editors as Benjamin Harris, a bigot and a scoundrel, and John Peter Zenger, a dim and not very competent fellow."

– John Harrison, "The War of Words."

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Journalism historians who accept the Developmental interpretation have often emphasized the growing business acumen and professionalism of the Revolutionary printers and the resulting improvements that developed during the war. Because of this interest, these historians have appreciated printers' efforts to be good newspapermen and businessmen first and Patriots or Tories second. Both Alfred McClung Lee, in a study of Dunlap and Claypoole of Philadelphia, and Sidney I. Pomerantz, in a study of the patriot press of New York and New Jersey, concluded that the revolutionary printers were good businessmen who tried to operate their establishment in the best manner possible. Pomerantz also praised the men he studied for helping the revolutionary cause "while observing canons of journalistic conduct all too often forgotten in wartime." In a study of James Rivington, Robert M. Ours lamented that Rivington has not been remembered for his contributions to American journalism:

> Rivington's direct legacy to American journalism was virtually nil—largely because of his reputation as a Tory liar. That was unfortunate, because his newspaper was one of the better ones in the colonies in the early months of its existence. Rivington had an excellent pattern to offer journalists in his policies regarding impartiality and freedom of the press. The evidence is strong that he tried to adhere to his announced policies. That he failed in the long run was largely the result of wartime pressures and polarization.[10]

(1963): 161–200; Rollo G. Silver, "Aprons Instead of Uniforms: The Practice of Printing, 1776–1787," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 87 (1977): 111–94; and C. M. Thomas, "The Publication of Newspapers During the American Revolution," *Journalism Quarterly* 9 (1932): 358–73.

9. Jim A. Hart, *The Developing Views on the News: Editorial Syndrome, 1500–1800* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1970), 130–67; and John M. Harrison, "The War of Words: The Role of Our First Editorial Writers in Making a Revolution," in *Newsletters to Newspapers: Eighteenth-Century Journalism*, ed. Donovan H. Bond and W. Reynolds McLeod,(Morgantown: School of Journalism, West Virginia University, 1977), 207-218.

10. Alfred McClung Lee, "Dunlap and Claypoole: Printers and News Merchants of the Revolution," *Journalism Quarterly* 11 (1934): 160–178; Sidney I. Pomerantz, "The Patriot Newspaper and the American Revolution," in *The Era of the American Revolution*, ed. R. B. Morris, (New York: Columbia University

As a group, the Developmental historians have continued to emphasize the growth of American journalism during the American Revolution, placing particular emphasis on the increasing professionalism among eighteenth-century printers. The American Revolution provided the impetus for colonial printers to become more aware of the potential of their productions, particularly their weekly newspapers. The Developmental writers emphasize this growing awareness. They consider the conflict with Great Britain to have been essential in the press's move from being primarily a souce of information to also serving as an influence on public opinion, a move that was necessary if American journalism was to develop into the powerful instrument that it became in the nineteenth century.

THE PROGRESSIVE SCHOOL

After 1900 historians posited a new interpretation of American, and likewise journalism, history. In an era concerned with inequities and the lack of unity in American society, the Progressive historians emphasized the presence of conflict from the initial settlement of the colonies down to the present. Most of the conflicts occurred between different classes or sections in America, but the Revolutionary era represented a period of both internal and external troubles. Divisions existed between groups within the colonies and between the colonies and the mother country as well. In this environment, the press played an important role in carrying out a crusade for change. In pushing for alterations in the relationship between the colonies and Great Britain, the press often helped to accentuate the differences and thus helped to make the divisions worse.

"[Printer-editors] were discovering and using the levers of propaganda and opinion formation. In the process, they focused attention on the need for some kinds of assurances that editors would be able to express their opinions freely and openly--however unpopular these opinions might be."

– John Harrison, "The War of Words."

One of the most important historians to expound the Progressive view of the press was Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr. In research that spanned several decades, he stressed the growing power of the press during the 1760s, particularly during the Stamp Act crisis. The press changed greatly during the Revolution, but it also helped produce changes as well. Throughout the crises of the 1760s and 1770s, the patriot press "fearlessly and loudly championed the American cause, never yielding ground as did some of the politicians." According to Schlesinger's *Prelude to Independence: The Newspaper War on Great Britain, 1764–1776*, "the patriot journalists sought to activate popular resentment while keeping several paces ahead of it." Thus, the Revolutionary printers sought to use the unhappiness of the colonials to widen the divisions and increase the conflicts that existed with the mother country. From Schlesinger's perspective, the newspapers served to stir up the common people to support the desires of some of the colonial leadership to break away from Great Britain. The Revolutionary newspapers proved essential

Press, 1939), 305–31; and Robert M. Ours, "James Rivington: Another Viewpoint," in Bond and McLeod, 219–34.

in creating the colonial discontent that led to revolt. Without the press the Revolution would probably not have occurred.[11]

Other historians have gone beyond Schlesinger's conclusions in emphasizing printers' conscious use of propaganda, or pieces designed to mislead or deceive, to produce changes unsought by the majority of Americans. In *Propaganda in the American Revolution, 1763–1783,* Philip Davidson stated that the use of propaganda by the patriots indicated clearly that the revolt from Great Britain was not a move supported by the majority of colonials, for "had the Revolution been the work of a majority, united on methods and objects, in sure control of the movement throughout, there would have been little necessity for propaganda." Davidson concluded that colonial leaders who desired to be in control of their own affairs made good use of the American press to emphasize the differences between the colonies and the mother country. The result was independence.[12]

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"Propaganda was thus indispensable to those who first promoted resistance to specific British acts and ultimately urged revolution. ...The evidences of a conscious, systematic effort on the part of certain colonial leaders to gain public support for their ideas are unmistakable."
– Philip Davidson, *Propaganda and the American Revolution.*
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Davidson believed that patriot leaders were successful in their propaganda efforts, but other Progressive historians reached different conclusions. Carl Berger's *Broadsides and Bayonets: The Propaganda War of the American Revolution* said that, while propaganda in the press was important, it did not play a more decisive role in converting the neutrals than did patriot military victories. In several studies of the press, Ralph A. Brown concluded that printers tried to make use of their newspapers to further the cause of the side they supported, but Brown downplayed the impact of these efforts. The Tory press tried, but failed, to convince people that "the rebels were cruel and heartless" and that rebel leaders "were treacherous and self-seeking." In a study of the New Hampshire press, Brown concluded that the only indication of the effects of Whig newspaper propaganda was the importance of printers in the years after the war. Brown's work indicated that patriot leaders wanted to accentuate the divisions between the colonies and Great Britain, and Tory leaders to emphasize the conflicts between different groups of colonials, but neither group had much success in its efforts.[13]

Another important Progressive interpretation appeared in Edwin Emery's *The Press and America: An Interpretative History of Journalism.* Now in its sixth edition, this widely-used survey text emphasizes the internal conflicts of the American Revolution.

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11. Arthur M. Schlesinger, "Colonial Newspapers and the Stamp Act," *New England Quarterly* 8 (1935): 63–83; and *Prelude to Independence: The Newspaper War on Great Britain, 1764–1776* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1958).
12. Philip Davidson, *Propaganda in the American Revolution, 1763–1783* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1941).
13. Carl Berger, *Broadsides and Bayonets: The Propaganda War of the American Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1961); Ralph A. Brown, "New Hampshire Editors Win the War," *New England Quarterly* 12 (1939): 35–51; Ralph A. Brown, "The *Pennsylvania Ledger*: Tory News Sheet," *Pennsylvania History* 9 (1942): 161–75; and Ralph A. Brown, "The *Newport Gazette*, Tory News Sheet," *Rhode Island History* 13 (1954): 97–108.

The war was a "class struggle" in which "printers, publishers, and editors were important influences in preparing the public for revolution and in maintaining the fighting spirit during the War of Independence."[14]

With a growing interest in the role of economics in history, more recent Progressive historians have questioned the motives for the actions of Revolutionary printers. Several have concluded that most pressmen supported the patriot cause for reasons of economic survival rather than any strong ideological commitment. Robert D. Harlan, in studying David Hall, stated that, while Hall's support of the colonials proved to be genuine, he began moving in that direction in order to keep his newspaper alive. Alfred L. Lorenz's biography of Hugh Gaine described the printer as "essentially an apolitical man" who "pursued a course dictated by ambition and expediency." According to Lorenz, Gaine "had no strong political beliefs for which he was willing to risk his life or his fortune." Dwight L. Teeter concluded that John Dunlap's guiding principle was a desire to be successful financially, a goal that he accomplished. The fact that the desire to survive influenced decisions is reflected in areas other than politics, according to William F. Steirer. In a study of Philadelphia printers and their stands on social issues, Steirer stressed that "prudence and caution, not bravery and idealism, dominated the behavior of those newspapermen—indeed, they acted like the small businessmen protecting their investments that they in truth were."[15]

In recent years, historians have continued to expound the Progressive view of the role of the press in the American Revolution, with its emphasis on propaganda and conflict. Robert A. Rutland stressed both internal and external divisions, stating that "printers in Boston had to be vigilant, not of the king's attorney but of their own elected representatives." After an uneasy alliance, the printers supported the revolt and helped push public opinion toward independence. Studies of Margaret Draper by Susan Henry and of Clementina Rind by Norma Schneider found that both these female printers used their newspapers in the propaganda war after the Boston Tea Party in 1773. According to Charles Cutler, Connecticut editors "tended to serve one side or the other with a zeal that seemed to blind them to an alternate viewpoint." He stated that "social pressure won willing or unwilling converts to the Patriot cause" and that

"How then did the American colonies find themselves at war with the homeland in 1775? Perhaps it can be explained that the war was as much a class struggle--a domestic rebellion, even--as it was a struggle for political separation."

– Michael and Edwin Emery, *The Press and America.*

14. Michael and Edwin Emery, *The Press and America: An Interpretative History of Journalism*, 6th ed., (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1988), 45–68.

15. Robert D. Harlan, "David Hall and the Stamp Act," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 61 (1967): 13–37; Alfred L. Lorenz, *Hugh Gaine: A Colonial Printer-Editor's Odyssey to Loyalism* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972); Dwight L. Teeter, "John Dunlap: The Political Economy of a Printer's Success," *Journalism Quarterly* 52 (1975): 3–8, 55; William F. Steirer, Jr.,"A Study in Prudence: Philadelphia's 'Revolutionary' Journalists," *Journalism History* 3 (1976): 16–19.

"The first work of newspapers in the Revolution was not the planning of a new society but rather the exposure of injustice in the old."
– Thomas Leonard, *The Power of the Press.*

the press "incited Connecticut citizens against British rule." William F. Steirer, in a study of the Philadelphia press, found that "much of the impetus for the printers' directing the thinking and actions of readers (or at least trying to) initially came from non-journalists." Thomas C. Leonard found that Revolutionary newspapers emphasized "the exposure of injustice" in British-American society.[16]

From the Progressive standpoint, the Revolution produced and accentuated the divisions that already existed in colonial society, whether they were internal conflicts between groups of Americans or strains in colonial relations with Great Britain. The result was a war which broke ties with the mother country and restructured internal relationships in the young United States.

THE CONSENSUS SCHOOL

Following World War II, American historians began to challenge the Progressive interpretation. In the face of growing world conflict, Americans searched for and found much that they had in common, both in the past and in the present. The Consensus interpretation of American history downplayed the existence of conflict and emphasized the unifying elements that existed.[17] Bernard Bailyn, the major proponent of this new outlook, stressed the common ideology held by most Americans prior to the American Revolution. Because the colonials agreed on basic issues such as the type of government they wanted, the real revolution was actually over before the war started. In many ways, the revolt from Great Britain was a conservative move because the colonials sought to preserve rights and privileges they had assumed many years before.[18] The Revolution represented the fulfillment of already-accepted ideas rather than growing divisiveness in American society.

In journalism history the Consensus interpretation produced an emphasis on the role of the press as a support for the government and a reflection of the ideas and attitudes of the general populace. The media aimed at solving the colonial problems in a feasible manner. The printers worked hard to maintain both their principles and their business in the face of

16. Robert A. Rutland, *The Newsmongers: Journalism in the Life of the Nation, 1690–1972* (New York: The Dial Press, 1973), 26–49; Norma Schneider, "Clementina Rind: 'Editor, Daughter, Mother, Wife,'" *Journalism History* 1 (1974): 137–40; Susan Henry, "Margaret Draper, Colonial Printer Who Challenged the Patriots," *Journalism History* 1 (1974): 141–44; Charles L. Cutler, *Connecticut's Revolutionary Press* (Chester, Conn.: Pequot Press, 1975); William F. Steirer, "Riding 'Everyman's Hobby Horse': Journalists in Philadelphia, 1764–1794," in Bond and McLeod, 263–75; and Thomas C. Leonard, *The Power of the Press: The Birth of American Political Reporting* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 36.

17. This group of historians sometimes is called the Neo-Conservative school, for its emphasis on the Revolution as basically a conservative movement.

18. Bernard Bailyn, ed., *Pamphlets of the American Revolution, 1750–1776* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965).

many obstacles. In doing so they made lasting contributions to the growth of American journalism.

Consensus historians vigorously criticized the Progressive interpretation for its emphasis on class struggle and division. Maurice Cullen, in "Middle-Class Democracy and the Press in Colonial America," concluded that the Revolution, far from being a class struggle, actually constituted a fight to establish democracy in America. In a study of the Stamp Act, Francis G. Walett admitted the importance of the press in bringing on the colonial rebellion, but stressed the unifying efforts of the press over the divisiveness produced by the revolt. Bill F. Chamberlin's study of post-war Connecticut, "Freedom of Expression in Eighteenth-Century Connecticut: Unanswered Questions," succinctly summed up the outlook of the Consensus historians: "For the most part, the rulers and the ruled shared common interests in order and commercial growth." During the Revolution, the result was a united effort to throw off the British yoke.[19]

"Study of the pamphlets confirmed my rather old-fashioned view that the American Revolution was above all else an ideological-constitutional struggle and not primarily a controversy between social groups undertaken to force changes in the organization of society."
– Bernard Bailyn, *Pamphlets of the American Revolution.*

The Consensus outlook has not always been strongly supported by historians of the Revolutionary-era press, primarily because of the press's attempts to influence the public's actions during the war. However, the Consensus historians emphasize the existence of a unity of ideas prior to the war, which means that the newspapers of the War of Independence merely reflected opinions already commonly held rather than trying to change the attitudes of the uncommitted.

THE CULTURAL SCHOOL

One final historical interpretation has also appeared since World War II. Represented primarily by the work of Sidney Kobre, the Cultural interpretation stresses the interrelation of the media and the societal/cultural environment. The major concern is the impact of the media on society, and vice versa. In studying the press of the eighteenth century, Kobre looked at social and economic growth in the colonies as it encouraged the growth of the press. He examined the expansion of areas of settlement, the population, and the economy and how this growth affected newspapers. He concluded that the press "was the only agency of a national character which could act as a channel of news and persuasion." Furthermore, "the press helped develop 'a consciousness of kind,' an emotional, intellectual and economic sympathy for distant colonies. The many newspapers aided in unifying the thirteen separate colonies into one nation and in promoting the social solidarity required for a war of revolt."[20] Kobre stressed the changes in society partially

19. Maurice R. Cullen, "Middle-Class Democracy and the Press in Colonial America," *Journalism Quarterly* 46 (1969): 531–35; Francis G. Walett, "The Impact of the Stamp Act on the Colonial Press," in Bond and McLeod, 157–70; and Bill F. Chamberlin, "Freedom of Expression in Eighteenth-Century Connecticut: Unanswered Questions," in Bond and McLeod, 247–62.

20. Sidney Kobre, "The Revolutionary Colonial Press—A Social Interpreta-

produced by the press that were necessary for the creation of a new nation.

CONCLUSIONS

Historians of American journalism clearly have not agreed about the role of the press in the American Revolution. There are many possibilities for further study that should prove enlightening. Not enough studies have followed Kobre's lead in emphasizing the interrelation between the societal and environmental context and the media. More comparisons between Revolutionary newspapers and the press of other eras in American history should prove useful. Was the Revolutionary press similar to other wartime journalistic efforts in the United States? This question has not been adequately answered. Also, the bicentennial of the French Revolution has produced several studies on the French press.[21] With new work being done in this area, it seems obvious that comparisons of the French and American revolutionary presses are in order. Very few efforts have been undertaken to compare the eighteenth-century American press with those of other countries or other revolutions. Such studies would broaden our understanding of revolutionary media in general.

Finally, one of the major problems in the historiography of the American Revolutionary press has been the failure of all scholars who study this area to work together. There are historians of the American Revolution who study the role of journalism and historians of journalism who study the American Revolution. These two groups need to combine their efforts in an attempt to ask the same questions of the evidence and use the techniques and tools of both to provide a more comprehensive picture of the Revolutionary-era press. Perhaps then we will discover that parts of all the interpretations are true, for the press served to publicize the ideas of republicanism and to emphasize the divisions with Britain while stressing the unity of the colonials in their efforts to establish their independence. Out of all these efforts came a more professional newspaper, which found growing power and prestige in its unique position as a dependable source of information and a possible influence on public opinion. No matter how or why this happened, the press wars of the American Revolution proved to be essential in producing this change among American journalists.

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tion," *Journalism Quarterly* 20 (1943): 193–204; and *Development of American Journalism* (Dubuque, Iowa: W. C. Brown Company, 1969), 53–100.

21. Of particular importance is *Revolution in Print*, ed. Robert Darnton and Daniel Roche (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), published in conjunction with the New York Public Library exhibition of the same name.

THE MOSCOW CORRESPONDENTS: REPORTING ON RUSSIA FROM THE REVOLUTION TO GLASNOST.

By Whitman Bassow.
- William Morrow and Co.
- 1988, 352 pp.
- $18.95, Cloth

AMERICANS IN THE late 1950s and 1960s were haunted by the threat of Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev: "We will bury you!" The words helped nurture a climate of hate and suspicion between the two nations that still lingers. But Bassow, in this engrossing account of the role of American correspondents in Moscow, labels the quote a misinterpretation by the reporters of a "common Russian expression meaning, 'We will survive you. We will be present at your funeral.'" The incident is a good example of how news from Moscow was shaped by the preparation of correspondents and their reporting strategies. That Khrushchev quote was the victim of reporters who spoke little Russian and of their system for developing an "agreed text" of quotes before filing stories. The agreed text insured that all news outlets received the same misinterpretation of Khrushchev's words.

The anecdote is one of hundreds in the book that help to illuminate the challenges and frustrations that have marked this particular journalistic assignment since the Soviets allowed United States news organizations to enter in 1921. Bassow has collected the memories of those correspondents and their families to place the Moscow assignment "within the framework of Soviet history and the relationship between the reporters and the society about which they were writing." This he does well, mainly utilizing information obtained during extensive interviews with seventy-six former and current correspondents and his own five years as a Moscow correspondent.

Bassow begins with a detailed discussion of the excellent coverage of the 1917 revolution by John Reed, who, like so many reporters after him, spoke no Russian. When the Bolsheviks barred foreign reporters for being "anti-Soviet," the press gathered in distant Riga, where their information about Russia came mainly from deposed politicians, former tsarist government and military representatives, and other unreliable sources. As a result the world received a very skewed version of events in Russia. Widespread famine opened the doors for the press in 1921; as a condition of United States assistance, the Soviets were required to allow the press to travel freely through Russia to report on distribution of the supplies. This freedom to travel ended with the relief effort and reporters mainly confined to Moscow, making it difficult to write fully about this vast nation.

Other limitations also shaped the reporting. Technologically the correspondents were isolated from their news organizations by tapped telephones and limited and slow cabling facilities. Meeting deadlines back home was usually impossible. In addition, there was the continuing stress of dealing with both formal and informal censorship. The creation in 1946 of Glavlit, a strict censorship body, forced journalists to devise codes and strategies for getting information out. They often decided that a story wasn't worth the possible ramifications, including expulsion, which was the fate of some, including Bassow.

There is a wealth of information in Bassow's well-written chronicle of the Moscow assignment. He offers insight into the role of women correspondents and the lives of correspondents' family members, the special problems of correspondents with Russian wives, the "symbiotic relationship" be-

tween the press and Russian dissidents, dealings with the American embassy and with editors back home, and the impact on journalists of the Helsinki Accords in 1975 and, later, *glasnost*. Bassow's concluding chapter provides a thoughtful analysis of the accomplishments and failures of the American media in covering the USSR. He is critical of the way in which Moscow correspondents have traditionally been selected and provides his own criteria for such a choice.

Though lacking in footnotes, *The Moscow Correspondents* is a fascinating and rich addition to journalism historiography.

...Pamela A. Brown
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TRANSATLANTIC VISTAS: AMERICAN JOURNALISM IN EUROPE, 1900–1940.
By Morrell Heald.
• Kent State University Press
• 1988, 300 pp.
• $24, Cloth

THIS BOOK undertakes to describe the work of a large group of American reporters who tried to tell their readers back home what was happening during an extraordinary era. From 1900 to 1940, Europe went through the elegant, ordered, and optimistic *Belle Epoque*, plunged into what former correspondent Ernest Hemingway called "the most colossal murderous mismanaged butchery that has ever taken place on earth," recovered shakily during the twenties, then slid into the darkening years of dictatorships and aggressions ending in World War II.

As Morrell Heald makes clear, the men and women who tried to "cover" this vast, complex, and often confusing beat were also laboring under the handicap of having very little tradition of foreign correspondence to sustain them. The Atlantic cable had been laid in 1870, but American newspapers, with few exceptions, relied on foreign nationals for most European news until near the turn of the century. Additionally, as Heald shows through ample citations, the Americans abroad sometimes had to deal with editors at home who had little sympathy for what they were trying to do and less understanding of the conditions under which they were trying to do it. Many newspapers pushed their reporters to send plentiful stories about the doings of home town people visiting in Europe—what the correspondents resentfully called "tourist bureau" work. At the same time, as Edward Price Bell, who established the London bureau for the *Chicago Daily News*, put it in 1905, "our instructions come to this: SEND NO SMALL STUFF; SEND STUFF EVERY DAY." This means, he concluded, "SEND BIG STUFF EVERY DAY" even though sometimes "Europe is newsless." To keep sending "stuff," Bell sent feature stories about European life, only to be met with complaints from his managing editor, Charles Dennis, that his stories were "wandering too far away from the news." Some publishers, suspicious of foreigners in general, were afraid their correspondents would lose their Americanism: Col. Robert R. McCormick, xenophobic publisher of the *Chicago Tribune*, kept transferring his reporters from country to country, apparently to keep them from "going native."

In order to render his subject manageable, Heald limits his book to foreign correspondence from Europe, excluding Russia. Further, he concentrates particularly on the reporters for the *Chicago Daily News*, which for many years operated the best overseas news service. (Heald was able to examine in depth the records of the transactions between the Chicago home office and its overseas staff, a valuable asset.) He divides his correspondents into two groups, the first being the ones who began reporting from Europe around the turn of the century. This contingent, all from the *Chicago Daily News*, was led by Bell, and included Paul Scott Mowrer and Raymond Swing—later to become known to millions of radio listeners in 1939 through his calm and grandfatherly voice giving the latest war news from Europe. The

section on the experiences and problems of this first group is satisfying, with one exception—the treatment of the reporting of World War I.

Here Heald omits the vitally important reporting done when the Germans invaded neutral Belgium in order to carry out their plan for attack on France. As Barbara Tuchman put it in *The Guns of August*, "A remarkable group of masters of vivid writing . . . Richard Harding Davis for a syndicate of papers, Will Irwin for *Collier's*, Irwin Cobb for the *Saturday Evening Post*, Harry Hansen for the *Chicago Daily News*, John T. McCutcheon for the *Chicago Tribune*, and others" reported to the world on "the smoke of burning villages . . .the mayors and burgomasters shot as hostages." Those reports were responsible for shifting American opinion against Germany, and thus probably influenced the course of the war. Yet Harry Hansen, even though he wrote for the Chicago Group, is not even mentioned, nor are McCutcheon, Cobb, or Irwin, and Davis's extremely important role in the reporting from Belgium gets one sentence. Heald does give a good account of how various of the early correspondents were later co-opted into being cheerleaders for the French and British while the United States was still neutral, mainly because they had become emotional partisans for the Allies.

Heald's task is more complex as he focuses on the second wave of correspondents, those of the 1920s and 1930s. They include such stars as Dorothy Thompson, Negley Farson, Herbert L. Matthews, whose career for the *New York Times* extended past the Castro revolution in Cuba, John Gunther, Edgar Ansel Mowrer (Paul Mowrer's younger brother), William L. Shirer, Louis Lochner, who had a long and emotionally wracking stay as the Associated Press's Berlin bureau head through the rise of Hitler, Vincent Sheean, and Leland Stowe. The book is rich with detailed descriptions of the experiences of these and other reporters, of their struggles with the home office, their compromises, defeats, adventures, and occasional victories in reporting from totalitarian countries, and their deepening understanding of what was at stake. As a way of pointing out the negatives, Heald devotes much space to George Seldes, who finally quit foreign correspondence after his stories were repeatedly distorted or suppressed by the *Chicago Tribune*. Seldes's trenchant criticism of the superficiality of much reporting is important. And despite the focus on newspaper correspondents, Heald takes time to note the beginning of the era of great radio reporting, when Shirer broadcast from Vienna on Hitler's 1938 takeover of Austria in a roundup organized for CBS by Edward R. Murrow.

The danger for an ambitious, broad-scale book like *Transatlantic Vistas* is that it will become diffuse and dominated by a dutiful recitation of a great many different narratives. The more conscientious and scholarly the writer, the greater the danger. Heald is both conscientious and scholarly, but he saves his book by the quality of its introductory passages and by thoughtful and penetrating general discussion in the last two chapters. The most interesting part here is his examination of the reaction of the correspondents to their own country. Noting that the correspondents were challenged to explain the United States to curious Europeans, he writes that "in attempting to do so they were forced to consolidate and codify many of the attitudes and impressions about home that they had brought with them." It is interesting that many of the reporters' views of their home country in the 1920s—sharply critical of its materialism and indifference to other countries—echo criticism made of America of the 1980s. And it is also interesting that almost all the correspondents liked the America of the 1930s much better, feeling it a more humane place despite the Depression. One cannot come away from this thoughtful book without discovering, as do so many travelers, that the

way to learn about America is to go somewhere else.

...Edward A. Nickerson
University of Delaware

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AMERICAN JOURNALISM HISTORY: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY.
By Wm. David Sloan.
• Greenwood Press
• 1989, 359 pp.
• $49.95, Cloth

A PROFESSOR AT the University of Alabama and until recently editor of *American Journalism*, Sloan has undertaken to fill a long-standing gap in the study of journalism history. He has compiled a comprehensive annotated bibliography of works pertaining to United States journalism history from colonial to contemporary times. Some 2,600 separate entries provide information on dissertations, articles, monographs, books and reference materials published between 1810 and 1988.

Sloan makes no claim that the bibliography is exhaustive, although he states that the "most important articles and books" are included. The entries cover articles in more than one hundred journals, most of which are scholarly publications, although a few semi-popular magazines, particularly *Media History Digest*, are included. Sloan gives the purpose of the book as primarily to assist the "serious historian" in bibliographical searches. The book should be of special value to graduate students.

In the introduction Sloan characterizes seven approaches to the writing of journalism history: Nationalist, Romantic, Developmental, Progressive, Consensus, Cultural, and Libertarian. He explains each school briefly: the Nationalist represented the work of nineteenth-century elites, who viewed the press as a primary factor in American leadership; the Romantic, which shared the Nationalist orientation, produced mid-nineteenth century biographies extolling the virtues of individual editors; the Developmental, an approach beginning with the work of Frederic Hudson in 1873, stressed the history of journalism as the story of professional evolution in newsgathering and presentation; the Progressive, stemming from the early 1900s, saw the press as an ally of the masses of common people against powerful business interests; the Consensus, an interpretation that emerged after World War II, held that the media ought to work with the government and established interests rather than stimulate conflicts within society; the Cultural, founded in the sociological work of Robert E. Park in the 1920s, drew attention to the social forces affecting the direction of journalism; the Libertarian, a strain dominating works in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, assumed that freedom of the press is the central issue in the history of American journalism.

Acknowledging that these seven historical interpretations frequently overlap, Sloan contends that keeping them in mind will help readers recognize the historiographical context of the works listed in the bibliography. The introduction ends with his list of "the most fundamental issues addressed by historians on the various chapters in American journalism history."

The entries are divided into sixteen chapters: General History of Journalism, 1690–Present; the Colonial Press, 1690–1765; the Revolutionary Press, 1765–83; the Party Press, 1783–1833; Freedom of the Press, 1690–1800; the Penny Press, 1833–60; the Antebellum and Civil War Press, 1820–65; the Press of the Industrial Age, 1865–83; the Age of New Journalism, 1883–1900; Frontier and Regional Journalism, 1800–1900; the Emergence of Modern Journalism, 1900–1945; the Press and the Age of Reform, 1900–1917; the Media and National Crises, 1917–45; Broadcasting, 1920–Present; the Contemporary Media, 1945–Present; Research Guides and Reference Works.

One can only applaud Sloan for engaging in the task of annotating such a vast array of works. Unfortunately, some typographical mistakes mar the

book. Also, the annotations seem uneven. Some entries are not annotated at all, while others are given critical evaluations. In many cases Sloan quotes from the work itself to explain its approach or theme. The volume refers to only a few works published in 1988; it might have been clearer for the reader if the book's scope had specifically ended with the year 1987.

Overall this is a useful, stimulating volume that pulls together a diverse collection of materials. It should enrich the teaching and writing of journalism history. One may not necessarily agree with Sloan's selections for the bibliography or his evaluations of certain works, but one can be grateful to him for producing a provocative piece of scholarship that shows the continuing vitality of the journalism history field. This book should be in all university libraries.

...Maurine Beasley
University of Maryland

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IMAGES OF THE ENEMY. REPORTING THE NEW COLD WAR.
By Brian McNair.
• Routledge
• 1988, 288 pp.
• $13.95, Paper

BRIAN MCNAIR'S study, the result of a Ph.D. dissertation in sociology at the University of Glasgow, is concerned with "the way in which the idea of the Soviet threat, and the many issues relating to it, have been reported by the British television news." Based on extensive interviews with British and Soviet journalists, the work also offers a perceptive view of the Soviet news media with emphasis on the accession to power of Mikhail Gorbachev and its effect on Anglo-American "media coverage" of the Soviet Union. McNair concentrates on television because it is (as in the United States) "the most important news medium in Britain today [which] claims for itself the status of an objective and impartial information source." What he endeavors to determine is whether television news coverage of the East-West debate in Britain has really been "neutral, balanced, and impartial." Since "images of the Soviet Union on British television are at the heart of the book," McNair has sought to discern what constraints on news reporting of the USSR could *not* be attributed to subjective factors affecting the journalists, but which might explain some of the apparent features of coverage. The categories of "coverage" which concern him are (1) the defense debate, (2) the peace movement, and (3) the dialogue between the superpowers on arms limitation.

What are the conclusions of this analysis of the British television news media? McNair quite convincingly demonstrates that the television news has *not* communicated a completely valid account of the defense and disarmament debate, but only a scenario in which certain fixed points of view are disseminated. In other words, the television news media persist in presenting "stereotyped images of the USSR" that reflect a "conservative" frame of reference and therefore is neither neutral nor impartial. Indeed, despite Gorbachev's *glasnost* in public relations, the British (and American?) media report the Soviet viewpoint as less truthful and credible than Western news sources. McNair cites several examples to qualify his assertions, but also declares that "If the Soviet viewpoint has tended to be underrepresented" in the West, it is also because of the notorious and often self-defeating Soviet constraints imposed on routine news-gathering by Western journalists and the government's negative news management (so apparent in the Korean Airlines crisis). However, since the advent of Gorbachev, the Soviet government has developed and used news management that almost rivals its American counterpart, and this development, asserts McNair, has softened "the rhetoric in the superpower dialogue." Nevertheless, McNair fears that "for television news and the Western media in general, skillful news management and *glasnost* on the Soviet side will not entirely cancel the

effect of 'bias.'" It will only provide those in the Western media who seek to achieve a more objective view of Soviet-Western issues with better raw material to do their job properly.

McNair's study is a good read, augmented by explanatory endnotes, a good selective bibliography, and a useful index.

...J.O. Baylen, Emeritus
Eastbourne, England

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EDGAR SNOW.
By John Maxwell Hamilton.
• Indiana University Press
• 1988, 352 pp.
• $25, Cloth

THE AMERICAN PUBLIC could use another Edgar Snow. Three times during his half-century career, when China was walled off from most reporters, Snow achieved journalistic coups that gave the larger world some sense of the historic forces shaping that country. It seems appropriate that John Maxwell Hamilton's rich biography appears just as a new wave of tumult makes understanding of the Chinese once more a priority. One wonders what Snow would do with the story and is convinced by Hamilton's portrayal that Snow would report these newest developments with courage, resourcefulness, and a unique understanding of Chinese culture and history.

In 1936, eight years after arriving in China on a Midwestern youth's search for adventure, Snow became the first Western reporter in nearly a decade to meet the Chinese Communists. Slipping through a Nationalist blockade to reach the caves of Yenan, Snow spent four months with Chou En-lai and Mao Tse-tung and emerged to write *Red Star Over China*, called by one reviewer, "the greatest single feat performed by a journalist in our century." For the first time, there was a description of the Communists not as a group of bandits, but as a disciplined movement with a chance of success. The book remains a key source, even within China, about the movement's early days.

Snow's reporting ranged widely, including the Soviet Union during and after World War II, Gandhi's India, and Vietnam, but China was always his focus. In 1960, with the Red Star ascendant over a closed society, Snow battled both United States and Chinese bureaucracy to visit again. He was the first American reporter to interview Mao since 1949, and the last American journalist in China before the Cultural Revolution.

In 1970, Snow was the first American reporter to return after the revolution. In a remarkable gesture, he was invited to stand next to Mao on the balcony of Tiananmen Gate, reviewing thousands of troops marching by in celebration of the twenty-first anniversary of the People's Republic.

"You have made China practically a monopoly," Harrison Salisbury of the *New York Times* told Snow. The monopoly was undervalued. Americans tend to look at the rest of the world, particularly the non-capitalist world, through an astigmatic lens. Snow battled editors, reviewers and communist-hunters to report what he had found, not what they wanted him to find.

The great strength of Hamilton's biography is that he is writing not just about Snow, but also about the biases built into much foreign correspondence, about the American lack of interest in the rest of the world, and about the anti-Communist hysteria that damaged careers and the free flow of information in this country.

Although Snow saw himself as a bridge between China and the rest of the world, and, unlike many reporters, was able to view Chinese developments from a Chinese perspective, he was also careful as a reporter, hard-headed in his questions, and true to his own conclusions, no matter whether they were popular or lucrative. "Whatever his sympathies," Hamilton concludes, "Snow was above all a journalist." That is fine praise, and Hamilton's book should help win Snow the greater attention he deserves.

A final note: Edgar Snow took a journalism history course at the Uni-

versity of Missouri, and he got a *D*. Apparently he was better at making journalism history than at studying it.

...Judith A. Serrin
Columbia University

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MEDIA, MYTHS, AND NARRATIVES: TELEVISION AND THE PRESS.
Edited with an introduction by James W. Carey.
• Sage
• 1988, 270 pp.
• $16.95, Paper

FREUD SAID CULTURE arose from man's attempt "to defend himself against the superior powers of nature." Life is hard, Freud knew, and man's self-regard calls for consolation. Culture robs life of its terror and gives life context, structure, and meaning.

Once, then, culture was consolation. But not now.

People now seek protection from—or at least understanding of—culture. As it provides a context that offers order and meaning for people, culture also limits meaning and secures order and becomes the context in which some people are fulfilled and others are denied. How does this happen and why?

These are large questions. But *Media, Myths, and Narratives: Television and the Press*, volume 15 of the Sage Annual Reviews of Communication Research, attempts to confront them. The book is a collection of twelve essays by some top writers in communication. It is edited and introduced by James W. Carey, dean of the College of Communications at the University of Illinois and a man who has done much to establish cultural studies as an area of research.

Divided into three parts —Overviews, Television, and the Press —Carey's book offers studies of United States popular culture from the perspective of broad concepts used in their broadest sense: myth, ritual, narrative, story.

Carey has certainly assembled a stellar cast. Michael Schudson studies the autobiographies of Lincoln Steffens and Harrison Salisbury for insights into news reporting as a vocation. Tamar Liebes and Elihu Katz discuss viewer understanding of "Dallas." Horace Newcomb argues for the multiple meanings of television programs. Roger Silverstone continues his comparisons of television and myth. John Pauly studies Rupert Murdoch as outsider and "other" figure for the American press. David Eason reviews newspaper discussions of Janet Cooke to consider boundaries of the permissible in journalism. And there are still others.

What could possibly tie all this together? Nothing.

Carey does not even try and that is just as well. After a one-paragraph acknowledgment that "the distinctiveness of individual voices is greater than the thematic unities among the essays," Carey launches into his own thoughtful, almost mournful, contemplation of the possibility and temerity of studying culture.

His voice has grown sad over the years. Gone are the confident, cheerful rhythms that marked "A Cultural Approach to Communication," the bold 1975 essay that used Dewey to conceive communication as transmission and ritual, propounded its own definition of communication, and offered the hope that cultural studies might provide "a model of and for communication of some restorative value in reshaping our common culture."

In 1988 Carey's voice is measured, seasoned. His tone is almost weary, with the resonance of a veteran ballplayer who has seen it all, maybe seen too much. "We have discovered, in short, our powers to make art, and the discovery has alienated rather than comforted us," he writes. "We have discovered culture, to use Ernst Cassirer's apt phrase, as 'the place of the mind in nature' and the discovery has its tragic side, our separation from what the Germans more elegantly called the *Umwelt*."

But Carey is nowhere near ready to hang up his spikes. Troubled by those who would reduce culture to ideology, haunted by the still-kicking corpses of

functionalism and effects, distracted by the decades-long echoes of the mass culture debate, Carey still has the guts to turn inward and question what once was his assumption: the possibility of studying culture.

He asks: How are we to take culture seriously? Working within the confines of culture, how do we study culture? Using the language of culture, how do we talk about culture?

His answer is two-fold. He suggests that culture can be studied "from an anthropological side," which acknowledges an overarching unity to human life: the quest to give meaning to reality. Here myth, ritual, narrative, and story become keys that can be applied to all cultures, uniting our own struggle for meaning with those of other times and other places. But Carey is too much an historian to leave culture to the anthropologists. He says studies of culture must also be situated and specific, grounded in a particular time and place.

We find in this book then that Carey has remained remarkably focused. Fourteen years ago he wrote: "We create, express, and convey our knowledge of and attitudes toward reality through the construction of a variety of symbol systems: art, science, journalism, religion, common sense, mythology. How do we do this? What are the differences between these forms?"

What has changed in fourteen years is that Carey perhaps realizes more acutely, more reflexively, that his questions speak to the magic of symbols, of culture, of people, of answers, of questions, of self-consciousness: We are privileged and doomed to use words to speak of words.

The essays in *Media, Myths, and Narratives* are marked by the same awareness. They share, if nothing else, recognition of the privilege and problem of studying culture. Yet they raise their questions nonetheless. The answers are not forthcoming. But the voices are strong, the topics are engaging, and the words are part of an earnest effort to understand our culture and ourselves.

...Jack Lule
University of Tulsa

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OUTCASTS: THE IMAGE OF JOURNALISTS IN CONTEMPORARY FILM.
By Howard Good.
• The Scarecrow Press
• 1989, 195 pp.
• $25, Cloth

IN *KING KONG* intrepid filmmaker and self-promoter Carl Denham invites the press to meet his latest attraction, the eighth wonder of the world, a ten-ton gorilla with a yen for lovely Fay Wray. As the gentlemen of the press madly begin snapping photos, flash bulbs popping like hail on a tin roof, Kong, perhaps more knowledgeable about the ways of the press than might be expected of a recent emigre, goes ape, straining against his chains, enraged because he thinks the press is attacking Fay. As chromium steel links begin snapping, one journalist casually remarks, "Ah, let him howl. These are swell pictures."

That scene pretty much sums up the way Hollywood movies saw journalists in the 1930s. Long before Timothy Crouse popularized the phrase "pack journalism," the movies depicted reporters as a rowdy, irresponsible herd who would permit nothing, not even a ten-ton gorilla or the truth, to stand in the way of a good story. And in thirties movies the truth and a good story were often diametrically opposed. Above all, however, many of these films suggested that being a journalist was basically fun.

But as Howard Good's book indicates, contemporary movies are apt to present a darker, more critical view of the press. Journalism doesn't seem so much fun anymore. It's serious business. Good examines around twenty-five journalism movies made since the 1960s and, of these, only a handful (*All the President's Men, Under Fire, The Parallax View*) present journalists in a favorable light. (Actually, there are more that Good misses—*Eyewitness* and *Capricorn One*—but

not many more.) Far more typical are movies like *Absence of Malice*, in which a reporter's disregard for truth and decency leads to the destruction of reputations and lives. As Good writes, "From the late 1960s through the mid-1980s, Hollywood has treated audiences to a parade of reckless reporters, cynical editors, and money-crazed corporate executives who crush reputations and lives for a scoop or a ratings point."

By and large, writers on Hollywood movies have concentrated on the more highly conventionalized genres like the western, the gangster film, and the screwball comedy and deferred work on the more marginal ones, like the political film and the journalism film. Good's book is only the second one on the topic, and he rightly notes that the first, Alex Barris's *Stop the Presses!* wasn't adequate. Good's volume is an improvement, but it too has its share of problems.

Good focuses on how public attitudes have altered the movies' depiction of the press. He also examines such related topics as the nature of the genre of the journalism film and the way genre films "work to reconcile the turbulent present with traditional beliefs and melt it into myth." Defining genres is always a tricky business, and Good's attempt at it has some rather obvious limitations. He breaks down the genre structurally into three subgenres or plot types, but these exclude a number of movies (*Citizen Kane*, *It Happened One Night*) that many of us—and I suspect Good—would consider journalism movies. In fact, because several of Good's specimen movies don't fit these subgenres either, I suspect he really isn't working with a structural definition of the genre at all but rather a tautological one: a journalism movie is a movie about journalism.

The shifting definitions, though, aren't as bothersome as his sailing past some interesting questions. For instance, it might be rewarding to consider just what audience expectations are about this genre. It might be interesting to speculate about whether less articulated genres like the journalism film are more vulnerable to shifts in public attitude than more highly articulated genres like the western or the slasher movie. It might be interesting to compare the way the press is treated in the journalism movie with the way it is treated in other kinds of films. It might be interesting to see just how one of his specimen movies uses traditional beliefs to qualify current ideology. While this project is occasionally mentioned, it's clear that Good is not especially interested in the genre film's rhetorical strategies, but rather, as he says, in stories (that is, plot summary.)

To be fair, Good admits that his "emphasis is more on journalism than on film"; he confesses that his formal training in film consists of one college course in which he made a *D*. (His reason should endear him to film teachers everywhere: the films were boring.) When Good dispenses with musings about the genre film and tackles issues in journalism that affected the films, he's on much firmer, though familiar, ground. I can imagine his book would be of use to students too young to remember the Vietnam War and Watergate and their effect on American society. For the rest of us, many of his summaries of historical background and their application to film often seem to be stating the obvious.

...Harris Ross
University of Delaware

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THE PRESS AND THE ORIGINS OF THE COLD WAR, 1944–47.
By Louis Liebovich.
• Praeger
• 1988, 192 pp.
• $39.95, Cloth

FOUR PRINT organizations were selected by the author to provide a sampling, rather than a cross-section, of news reporting and editorial commentary in the pivotal years embraced by this study. Mr. Liebovich proposes to study the "line of logic followed" by the *New York Herald-Tribune*, *San Fran-*

cisco Chronicle, the *Chicago Tribune* , and *Time* magazine.

As a sampling in a compressed format, the book provides fascinating reading, quick quotes and anecdotal material with a good, specific index and an abundance of footnoted material for those wishing to follow up and delve deeper.

The inevitable compare-and-contrast approach accurately reflects a nation, and the world, brought to the brink of Doomsday by the A-bomb, a desire to put death and war behind, and the clash between the two mightiest surviving powers at the end of a war that had lasted twelve years. Midwest American xenophobia is paralleled by Stalin's mistrust of the West, an extension of Russian thought for centuries and heightened by a shared fear of nuclear dread.

Mr. Lievobich sets out to explore the composition of news organizations involved and to offer insights into the individual characteristics of those institutions. He also seeks to explain their commentary on the origins of the Cold War. His efforts yield a fast-moving, tightly written documentary one wishes were more inclusive. It is concise and within narrow parameters it succeeds very well. There is good background for more than the 1944–47 period cited in the title.

The author errs in describing the first test of an atomic device at Trinity Site in New Mexico as an underground blast. It was detonated atop a 100-foot-tall tower, as documented repeatedly, from Atomic Day One, by the AEC, William Laurence, Ferenc Szasz, and others.

Other observations are more accurate. Mr. Liebovich details the discrepancies among the reporting and editorial page staffs of the publications used, and notes that conservative publishers had an automatic, anti-communist viewpoint going into a delicate time of global realignment and growing, mutual suspicions.

While the study tries to answer questions about foreign affairs reporting and Roosevelt and Truman influences over journalists during the period, it does not try to establish a causal relationship between foreign policy makers' decisions in response to reporting and editorials, as Mr. Liebovich notes.

The writer keeps his book well within the boundaries he sets. Copious notes and quotes reestablish very accurately the prevailing mood of the time, the shift in American view from Russia as wartime heroic ally to the fearsome Red Menace. The Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan come in for intense analysis seen through the viewpoints of the publications chosen.

Given the author's analytical skill, it seems clear a broader scope would have paid dividends. It's his first book; I look forward to the next. Fatter, please.

...Robert H. Lawrence
University of New Mexico

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WAKE UP AMERICA! WORLD WAR I AND THE AMERICAN POSTER.
By Walton Rawls.
• Abbeville Press
• 1988, 296 pp.
• $49.95, Cloth

THE TITLE FOR this book comes from a 1917 poster by James Montgomery Flagg that shows the sleeping figure of Columbia. Rawls's thesis is that prior to and during World War I the poster was of vital importance in communicating vital information quickly, and excellent reproductions of numerous World War I posters make the book a visual delight. In the author's words, the purpose of *Wake Up America!* is "not simply to collect and illustrate some of the best examples [of World War I posters] from all aspects of the war effort but to provide guidance into the social, political, and historical context in which these posters commendably performed their patriotic duty."

Rawls, who is described as a senior editor at a leading publishing company, has organized the book chronologically, beginning with events which lead to the entry of the United States in the European war and tracing American involvement throughout the war. Each chapter pres-

ents a capsule history illustrated by colorful posters because the author believes that the posters cannot be understood without knowledge of the events which prompted their creation.

Although *Wake Up America!* includes a bibliography and an index, it is by no means a scholarly work. There is some discussion of the role of posters in the war effort, but they are primarily treated as illustrations, not as objects of importance in their own right. For the journalism historian, *Wake Up America!* can provide lush reproductions of powerful visual images, but supporting textual information about them and their creators must be found elsewhere. Those interested in investigating this might see *Posters of the First World War*, by Maurice Rickards, and *The Poster*, by Alain Weill.

...Lucy Caswell
Ohio State University

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PAPERS FOR THE MILLIONS: THE NEW JOURNALISM IN BRITAIN, 1850s TO 1914.
Edited by Joel H. Wiener.
• Greenwood Press
• 1988, 347 pp.
• $45, Cloth

HISTORIANS ARE WELL aware that journalism in Britain, as elsewhere in the Western world, underwent a transformation in the second half of the nineteenth century. A combination of technological advances, expanding public literacy, and commercial imperatives brought into being an array of newspapers and magazines that sought to achieve mass appeal (and massive circulations) by relying on simplified news reports, sensationalism, "human interest angles" of all kinds, modernized typography and layout, promotional gimmickry such as contests and campaigns, and a constant search for novelty and innovation. The emergence of these papers, customarily dated from about 1880 to about 1900, is inseparable in Britain from the careers of men such as Frederick Greenwood, W.T. Stead, T.P. O'Connor, and Alfred Harmsworth, later Lord Northcliffe. The term "New Journalism," intended as a pejorative epithet, is usually attributed to Matthew Arnold, who gave vent to his thoroughly offended sensibilities in 1887 when he accused the new techniques of being "feather-brained," misleading, and generally corrosive of the nation's moral fiber.

Arnold's attack, which was specifically prompted by Stead's editorship of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, serves as the departure point for several of the papers in this collection. In the absence of any single integrated and comprehensive account of the New Journalism, it is to studies such as these, focusing on particular organs, individuals, and episodes, that the most fruitful recourse is likely to be made. All but one were originally presented in 1986 at a conference sponsored in part by the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals at the City University of New York.

As might be expected, there is some overlapping between the papers, and some of them are more germane to the topic than others. A few impinge only tangentially on the character and development of the New Journalism, although each is fascinating in its own right. On the other hand, several of the papers, especially those by Laurel Brake, Joel Wiener, Harry Schalk, and James D. Startt, attempt with a good deal of success to survey the whole phenomenon from various angles. Most of the remaining studies concentrate on special subjects. Greenwood is considered by B.I. Diamond; Stead, by Ray Boston; the *Star* under O'Connor's leadership, by John Goodbody; and Reginald Britt, that *eminence grise* of late Victorian and Edwardian politics, and his machinations with the *Pall Mall Gazette*, by J.O. Baylen. A valuable contribution to our understanding of the New Journalism outside its London epicenter comes from Aled Jones through examination of its impact on the regional press in Wales. Papers by Rosemary T. VanArsdel and Deian Hopkin, respectively, offer suggestive studies of peri-

odicals directed specifically toward a readership of women, something that itself was usually considered a facet of the New Journalism, and of the emergence of the left-wing press.

Despite the variety of their subjects and approaches, many of these papers are informed by a common assumption that is the principal point to be extracted from the book itself. This is simply that the New Journalism was not a discontinuity in the history of British journalism, nor was it the diametric opposite of good journalism that Arnold's castigation implied. Many of its distinctive features, whether in content or form, had clear antecedents as far back as the middle of the century: hence the broad chronological span of the book's subtitle. By the same token, the New Journalism was clearly the forerunner of much that is characteristic of British journalism today, whether one considers "quality" papers such as *The Times* and the *Daily Telegraph*, whose origins antedated that of the New Journalism, or "popular" organs such as the *Daily Express*, the *Evening News*, and the *Sun*, which are more obviously, perhaps, modern extrapolations of trends given momentum a century ago by the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the *Star*, and the *Daily Mail*.

Joel Wiener has arranged the papers in a four-part framework, which prevents them from falling into a confusing hodge-podge, and provided a solid, workmanlike editorial introduction. His most valuable contribution, however, is his seventeen-page bibliographical essay. Almost a *catalogue raisonne* of historical writing on the New Journalism, this should be the starting place for any student of the subject.

...John A. Hutcheson, Jr.
Dalton College

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ON AND OFF THE AIR: AN INFORMAL HISTORY OF CBS NEWS.
By David Schoenbrun.
• E.P. Dutton
• 1989, 256 pp.
• $18.95, Cloth

ANOTHER BOOK about CBS? What could anyone possibly add to the literature on America's best-documented television network?

David Schoenbrun, a news veteran who joined the CBS Network just twelve years after its creation in 1928, promises to go beyond surface symptoms in evaluating the decline in status of that network's news operation. Generally, he succeeds with anecdotes concerning life as a Paris bureau chief and one of a small group of correspondents handpicked by the legendary Edward R. Murrow.

Schoenbrun joined CBS from the ranks of the New York City school system, where he was a high school teacher of French and Spanish. During his lengthy service to CBS, he came into contact with most of the network's leading figures. He discusses how both Edward R. Murrow and Douglas Edwards assisted him in the advancement of his career and describes the early Murrow–Fred W. Friendly partnership. The author, who died just before the book's publication, also details the serious issues affecting broadcasting in the early days including blacklisting and government oversight of special projects. Many of these tales are, of course, chestnuts which the informed reader will recall from earlier works, but Schoenbrun also offers splendid insight into the activity of the early foreign correspondents—an international perspective.

On and Off the Air is especially thorough in its coverage of the French people and the Paris scene of Schoenbrun's era. He describes, for example, how he developed a relationship with a half-dozen key reporters in the French capital to monopolize and beat opponents to important interviews. On the darker side, he offers insight into coverage of the Cold War—violence, abductions, riots, and coups. Back at home, Schoenbrun was selected to cover Eisenhower and Kennedy and he owns up to indiscretions regarding his performance on many occasions in that role, which

makes for interesting reading.

Like so many of the other CBS authors, Schoenbrun asserts that during the sixties, much of the discretionary decision-making power was removed from the province of the network correspondent. He outlines problems he had in this regard, concluding: "They [management] failed to treat us with the minimum courtesy and respect that we needed to maintain any standing for ourselves in hard-nosed Washington society, which is always eager to gossip and pounce on anyone vulnerable."(147) He was especially upset by an attempt by the "CBS Evening News" staff to preempt a talk with the French ambassador, an interview Schoenbrun had organized for a Sunday public affairs program he had been hosting. This was, according to the author, part of an overall attempt by CBS management to control content and remove autonomy, thus reducing the risk of controversy of the type generated by Edward R. Murrow. Offered a promotion in exchange for the removal of his public affairs program, Schoebnrun refused and left CBS.

The concluding sections offer insight into the decline of the network beginning with Vietnam coverage leading to the resignation of Fred Friendly as news chief. Overall, the author succeeds in his attempt to offer the why and how of the decline of CBS News. He is, of course, at his best when relating personal experiences to overall network performance. The story of how business interests overtook news values at CBS just prior to Schoenbrun's death has been told again and again, but the perspective offered by this seasoned and respected bureau chief is unique and thus worthy of review by journalism historians.

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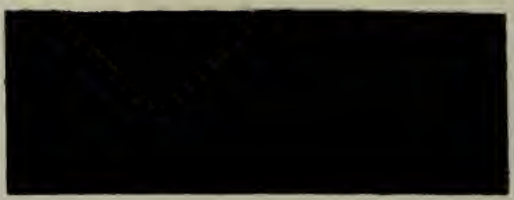
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